MISTRESS NANCY MOLESWORTH

BY

JOSEPH HOCKING

DOUBLEDAY AND McCLURE COMPANY

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MISTRESS NANCY MOLESWORTH

A TALE OF ADVENTURE

BY

JOSEPH HOCKING
Author of "The Birthright," etc.

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MISTRESS NANCY MOLESWORTH

CHAPTER I.

TREVANION.

The only part of my history which I regard as worthy of placing on record is confined to a few months. I was thirty-two years of age at the time, and had thus entered into the very summer of my life. At that age a man's position ought to be assured; at any rate his career should be marked out with tolerable plainness. Such, however, was not my fortune. Although I bear one of the best known and most honoured names in my native country, I, Roger Trevanion, was in sore straits at the time of which I write. And this not altogether because of my own faults. I did not come into the possession of my heritage until I was thirty, my father having retained absolute control of his estate until his death. Up to that time I knew nothing of his money matters. Neither, indeed, did I care. I had enough for my own use; I possessed good horses and was able to enjoy what festivities the county provided, to the full. Ever since my mother's death, which took place when I was fourteen, my father paid me but little attention. He saw to it that I was

taught to ride, fence, shoot, with other accomplishments befitting my station, and then allowed me to follow my own inclinations. As a consequence I became a gay fellow, being guilty, I am afraid, of most of the misdemeanours common to young men. I remembered that I was a Trevanion, however, and while I did not belong to the most important branch of the family, I held to the code of honour to which for many generations we had been true.

I knew that my father gambled freely, and had many relations with people which were beyond my comprehension. I did not trouble about this, however. Very few restraints were placed upon me, and I was content.

When my father died, I discovered that I was a poor man. I had still the semblance of wealth. I lived in the old house, and was supposed to own the lands surrounding it. The old servants still called me master, and the farmers paid their rents to me as they had paid them to my fathers. In reality, however, everything was mortgaged for nearly all it was worth. True, the lawyer told me that if I would discharge a number of superfluous servants, get rid of a number of useless horses, and consent to the sale of a quantity of timber, I could by practicing the strictest economy for ten years, place everything on a satisfactory footing.

"That will mean that I must give up hunting, racing, drinking, betting, besides closing the house and living like a hermit, I suppose?" I said to him. "That does not suit me. Is there no other way?"

"Yes, there is one," he replied.

"And that?"

"A suitable marriage."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Women are not in my way, Mr. Hendy," I said. The truth was, I had fancied myself in love when I was twenty, with the daughter of John Boscawen, a distant relation of the famous Boscawens. She had led me on until I was mad about her. I was her slave for several months, and she treated me as though I were a dog of the fetch-and-carry breed. Presently a young fellow from a place near Penzance, Prideaux by name, came to her father's place, and no sooner did he start a-courting her than she sent me about my business, drove me away in fact, as though I were a cur. Since that time I had hated women, and I grew angry at the thought of ever being expected to put confidence in one.

"The state of your affairs is not generally known," persisted the lawyer, "and a wife with a handsome dowry would mean getting back the deeds."

"No petticoats for me," I replied angrily.

"But if the petticoats mean comfort and freedom from money cares, would you not be wise to put aside your prejudice against them?"

"Anything but that," I cried, remembering Amelia Boscawen.

"Retrenchment or a wife," persisted the lawyer.

"Neither," I cried, angry that directly I came into my heritage I should find myself in such a fix.

The lawyer sighed.

"From whom did my father borrow?" I asked presently.

"Peter Trevisa," he replied.

I knew the man slightly. A little, shrivelled-up, old creature who had married late in life, and who had one son whom we called "Young Peter," because he was so much like his father. Young Peter was not so old as I, and I had never been friendly with him. In fact I had despised him as a ferrety kind of fellow, with whom I had nothing in common.

"He holds you like that," said the lawyer, putting out his hand and clasping it.

A great deal more was said, but to no purpose, and I went on as I had gone before. True, I discharged one or two of the younger servants and sold a quantity of timber, but I did not retrench as the lawyer advised. Thus at the end of two years I was, if possible, in a worse position than when my father died.

One day—and here my story really begins—I rode off to a fox hunt. I still held my head high, and rode the best horse in the field. I was careful, too, to be well dressed, and I prided myself that in spite of my poverty I was inferior to none. I was young, regarded as handsome, stood over six feet in my stockings, and was well set up. As usual I avoided women, although there were many at the meet. Although one of the heaviest men there, I kept well ahead through the day, and in spite of the weight of my debts I was in at the death.

After the hunt I went to Geoffry Luxmore's

ball, which was a part of the day's programme, but I did not join the dancers. I wanted to be free from women, and therefore accepted an invitation to take part in a game of cards.

While sitting at dinner I saw old Peter Trevisa. He nodded to me in a friendly way. Afterward he came to me and caught me by the arm.

"And how are matters going at Trevanion, eh, lad?" he asked.

"Grandly," I replied gaily, for I was heated with good wine and I felt no cares.

"Thou shouldst be in the dancing-room, lad," he said. "There's many a fine maid there; many with a big dowry. Geoffry Luxmore's daughter should suit thee well, Roger."

"No women for me," I cried.

"No; dost a hate them so?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Then my Peter'll be getting Trevanion, Roger?" he said with a leer.

In spite of my excitement I felt uneasy as I looked at his eyes.

"I've been thinking about calling in my mortgage," he said.

"Do," I replied.

"Ah, sits the wind in that quarter, eh? Well, Roger, thou hast always been a dare-devil fellow. But a landless Trevanion will be a sorry sight."

"There never has been one yet."

"And if thou art the first, 'twill be a sorry business."

I felt more uncomfortable, so I swallowed a large bumper of wine to keep my spirits up.

Presently we sat down to play. I won, I remember, freely at first, and was in high good humour.

"Luck seems with thee to-night," said old Peter Trevisa. "After all, it seems thou'st done well to come here rather than go a-dancing with the maidens yonder."

As he spoke the music ceased, and on looking up I saw Ned Prideaux, the fellow who had stolen Amelia Boscawen from me, come into the room.

I don't know that I felt any enmity toward him; the only wrong feeling I had for him was on account of my pride. That he should have been preferred before me wounded my vanity.

Old Peter Trevisa knew of the business, and laughed as he came up.

"Thou didst beat him in courting, lad," he said to Prideaux, "let's see if thou canst beat him at playing."

This he said like one who had been drinking a good deal. And although I had not seen him making free with wine, I fancied he must be fairly drunk; consequently I did not resent his words. Besides, I was in high good humour because of my winnings.

"I'll take a hand with pleasure," answered Prideaux. He wiped his brow, for he had been dancing, and sat down opposite me.

I broke a fresh bottle of wine, and we commenced playing. Fool that I was, I drank freely throughout the evening, and presently I became so excited that I hardly knew what I was doing. Several fellows gathered around to watch us, and

the stakes were high. I had not been playing with Prideaux long before my luck turned. I began to lose all I had gained. Old Peter Trevisa chuckled as he saw that the cards were against me.

"Give it up, Roger," he said in a sneering kind of way; "Trevanion can't stand bad luck, lad."

This wounded my pride. "Trevanion can stand as much as I care to let it stand," I replied, and I laid my last guinea on the table.

Presently Mr. Hendy, the old family lawyer, came to my side.

"Be careful, Mr. Trevanion," he whispered, "this is no time for ducks and drakes."

But I answered him with an oath, for I was in no humour to be corrected. Besides, wild and lawless as I had been for several years, I remembered that I was a Trevanion, and resented the family attorney daring to try to check me in public.

"He won't listen to reason, Hendy," sneered old Peter Trevisa. "Ah, these young men! Hot blood, Hendy, hot blood; we can't stop a Trevanion."

I had now lost all my money, but I would not stop. Old Trevisa standing at my elbow offering sage advice maddened me. I blurted out what at another time I would not have had mentioned on any consideration.

"You have a stake in Trevanion, Trevisa," I cried angrily.

"Nonsense, nonsense, Roger," whispered the old man, yet so loudly that all could hear.

"You have," I cried, "you know you have. If

I paid you all you lent my father, there would be little left. How much would the remnant be?"

"We'll not speak of that," laughed the old man.

"But we will," I said defiantly, for what with wine, and bad luck, and the irritation of the old man's presence I was beside myself. "What more would you lend on the estate?"

He named a sum.

"I'll play you for that sum, Prideaux," I cried.

"No," replied Prideaux; "no, Trevanion, you've lost enough."

"But I will!" I replied angrily.

"No," said Prideaux, "I'm not a gamester of that order. I only play for such sums as have been laid on the table."

"But you shall!" I cried with an oath; "you dare not as a gentleman refuse me. You've won five hundred guineas from me this very night. You must give me a chance of winning it back."

"Luck is against you, Trevanion," replied Prideaux. "It shall never be said of me that I won a man's homestead from him. I refuse to play."

"Prideaux has won a maid from you!" laughed old Trevisa with a drunken hiccup. "Be careful or he'll take Trevanion, too."

"I'll never play for the land," cried Prideaux again.

"But you shall," I protested. "If you refuse you are no gentleman, and you will act like a coward to boot."

"Very well," replied Prideaux coolly, "it shall be as you say."

We arranged our terms and commenced playing again.

Half an hour later I had lost the sum which old Peter Trevisa said he could further advance on Trevanion. I do not think I revealed my sensations when I realized that I had lost my all, but a cold feeling came into my heart nevertheless.

"Trevanion," said Prideaux, "we'll not regard the last half-hour's play as anything. It was only fun."

"That will not do," I replied. "We have played, and I have lost; that is all."

"But I shall not take——"

"You will," I cried. "You have played fairly, and it is yours. I will see to it at once that the amount shall be handed to you."

"I will not take it," cried Prideaux. "I absolutely refuse."

I know I was mad; my blood felt like streams of molten fire in my veins, but I was outwardly cool. The excitement I had previously shown was gone. Perhaps despair helped me to appear calm.

"Look you, Peter Trevisa," I said; "you give Prideaux a draft for that money."

"Roger, Roger," said the old man coaxingly, "take Prideaux's offer. He won your maid; don't let him win Trevanion too. You'll cut a sorry figure as a landless Trevanion."

I seized a pen which lay near, and wrote some words on a piece of paper.

"There," I said to Prideaux as I threw it to him, "it shall not be said that a Trevanion ever

owed a Prideaux anything, not even a gaming debt. Gentlemen, I wish you good-night."

I left the room as I spoke and ordered my horse. I was able to walk straight, although I felt slightly giddy. I scarcely realized what I had done, although I had a vague impression that I was now homeless and friendless. A ten-mile journey lay before me, but I thought nothing of it. What time I arrived at Trevanion I know not. My horse was taken from me by an old servant, and without speaking a word to any one I went straight to bed.

CHAPTER II.

PETER TREVISA'S OFFER.

THE next morning I awoke with terrible pains in my head, while my heart lay like lead within me. For some time I could not realize what had happened; indeed, I hardly knew where I was. It was broad daylight, but I could not tell what the hour was. Presently a clock began to strike, and then I realized that I lay in my own bed at Trevanion and that the clock stood in the turret of my own stables. I counted the strokes. It stopped at eleven. No sooner had it ceased than all that had happened the previous night flashed through my mind. I jumped out of bed and looked out of the window. Never had the place seemed so fair to look upon, never had the trees looked so large and stately. And I was burdened with the dread remembrance that it was no longer

mine. When I had dressed I tried to face the matter fairly. I tried to understand what I had done. The more I thought about it the more I cursed myself for being a fool. For I felt how insane I had been. I had drunk too much wine, I had allowed myself to become angry at old Peter Trevisa's words. I had blurted out truths which under other circumstances I would rather have bitten my tongue in two than have told. I had acted like a madman. Wild, foolish as I had been in the past, that night was the climax of my folly. Why had old Peter Trevisa's presence and words aroused me so?

The more I thought the sadder I became, the darker did my prospects appear. I had given Prideaux a written guarantee for the money I had been unable to pay. That piece of paper meant my ruin, if he took advantage of it. Would he do this? Yes, I would see that he did. In extremities as I was, I would rather sacrifice the land than violate our old code of honour.

I heard a knock at the door, and a servant entered.

"From Mr. Trevisa of Treviscoe, sir," he said.

I am afraid my hand trembled slightly as I took the letter.

"Who brought it, Daniel?" I asked.

"A servant, sir."

"Let breakfast be ready in ten minutes, Daniel; I'll be down by that time."

"Yes, sir."

I broke the seal of the letter and read it. I soon discovered that it was written by young

Peter Trevisa. For, first of all, it was written in a clear hand and correctly spelt, and I knew that old Peter's writing was crabbed and ill-shapen; besides which, the old man had not learnt the secret of stringing words together with anything like ease. The contents of the epistle, too, revealed the fact that the son, and not the father, acted as scribe. The following is an exact transcript thereof:

"TREVISCOE the 25th day of March in the year 1745.

"*To Roger Trevanion, Esq., of Trevanion.*

"DEAR SIR:—The events of last night having altered their complexion somewhat after you left the house of Geoffry Luxmore, Esq., and the writing which you gave to Mr. Edward Prideaux having changed hands, with that gentleman's consent, it has become necessary for you to visit Treviscoe without delay. My father has therefore instructed me to write (instead of employing our attorney, who has up to the present conducted all correspondence relating to my father's connections with Trevanion) urging your presence here. I am also asked to impress upon you the fact that it will be greatly to your advantage to journey here immediately, while your delay will be perilous to yourself. We shall therefore expect you here within two hours from the delivery of this letter.

"PETER TREVISA."

This communication certainly looked ominous, and I felt in no very pleasant frame of mind as I entered the room beneath, where my breakfast had been placed for me.

"Where is the fellow who brought this, Daniel?" I asked of my old serving-man.

"He is standin' outside, sur. He wudden cum in. He seemed in a terble 'urry."

I went to the door and saw a horse which had evidently been hard ridden. It was covered with mud and sweat. The man who stood by the animal's side touched his hat when he saw me.

"Go into the kitchen, my man, and get something to eat and drink," I said.

"I must not, sur," was the reply. "My master told me to ride hard, and to return immediately I got your answer."

"Anything wrong at Treviscoe?"

"Not as I know ov, sur."

I had no hope of anything good from old Peter, and I felt like defying him. My two years' possession of Trevanion had brought but little joy. Every day I was pinched for money, and to have an old house to maintain without a sufficient income galled me. The man who is poor and proud is in no enviable position. Added to this, the desire to hide my poverty had made me reckless, extravagant, dissolute. Sometimes I had been driven to desperation, and, while I had never forgotten the Trevanion's code of honour, I had become feared and disliked by many people. Let me here say that the Trevanion code of honour might be summed up in the following way: "Never betray a woman. Never break a promise. Never leave an insult unavenged. Suffer any privation rather than owe money to any man Support the church, and honour the king."

Having obeyed these dictates, a Trevanion might feel himself free to do what else he liked. He could be a drunkard, a gamester, a swashbuckler, and many other things little to be desired. I speak now for my own branch of the family, for I had but little to do with others of my name. In the course of years the estates had been much divided, and my father's patrimony was never great. True, there were many hundreds of acres of land, but, even although all of it were free from embarrassment, it was not enough to make its owner wealthy. My father had also quarrelled with those who bore our name, partly, I expect, because they treated him with but little courtesy. Perhaps this was one reason why he had been recklessly extravagant, and why he had taken no pains to make me careful. Anyhow I am afraid that while I was feared by many I was beloved by few. I had had many quarrels, and the law of my county being something lax, I had done deeds which had by no means endeared me to my neighbours.

My pride was great, my temper was of the shortest, my tastes and habits were expensive, and my income being small, I was weary of keeping up a position for which I had not the means.

Consequently, as I read young Peter Trevisa's letter, I felt like refusing to obey his bidding. I had been true to the Trevanion code of honour. I had given Prideaux a written promise that the gaming debt should be paid. Let them do their worst. I was young, as strong as a horse, scarcely knew the meaning of fatigue, and I loved adven-

ture. I was the last of my branch of the family, so there was no one that I feared grieving. Very well, then, I would seek my fortune elsewhere. There were treasures in India, there were quarrels nearer home, and strong men were needed. There were many careers open to me; I would leave Trevanion and go to lands beyond the seas.

I was about to tell the man to inform his master that I refused to go to Treviscoe, when I was influenced to change my mind. I was curious to know what old Peter had to say. I was careless as to what he intended doing in relation to the moneys I owed him, but I wondered what schemes the old man had in his mind. Why did he want to see me? It would do no harm to ride to his house. I wanted occupation, excitement, and the ride would be enjoyable.

"Very well," I said, "if I do not see your master before you do, tell him I will follow you directly,"

"Yes, sur," and without another word the man mounted the horse and rode away.

I ate a hearty breakfast, and before long felt in a gay mood. True the old home was dear to me, but the thought of being free from anxious care as to how I might meet my creditors was pleasant. I made plans as to where I should go, and what steps I should first take in winning a fortune. The spirit of adventure was upon me, and I laughed aloud. In a few days Cornwall should know me no more. I would go to London; when there nothing should be impossible to a man of thirty-two.

I spoke pleasantly to Daniel, the old serving-man, and my laughter became infectious. A few seconds later the kitchen maids had caught my humour. Then my mood changed, for I felt a twinge of pain at telling them they must leave the old place. Some of them had lived there long years, and they would ill-brook the thought of seeking new service. They had served the family faithfully too, and ought to be pensioned liberally instead of being sent penniless into the world.

A little later I was riding furiously toward Treviscoe. The place was a good many miles from Trevanion, but I reached it in a little more than an hour. I found old Peter and his son eagerly awaiting me.

"Glad to see you, Roger, glad to see you," said the old man.

"Why did you send for me?" I asked.

"I'll tell you directly. John, take some wine in the library."

The servant departed to do his bidding, and I followed the two Trevisas into the library.

"Sit down by the fire, Roger, lad; that's it. First of all we'll drink each other's health in the best wine I have in my cellar This is a special occasion, Roger."

"Doubtless, a special occasion," I replied; "but no wine for me at present. I want to keep my head cool in talking with such as you. What do you want of me?"

"Let's not be hasty, Roger," said old Peter, eyeing me keenly, while young Peter drew his chair to a spot where his face was shaded, but

from which he could see me plainly. "Let's be friendly."

"I'm in no humour to be friendly," was my rejoinder. "Tell me why you have wished me to come to you?"

"I would have come to you, but I had a twinge of gout this morning, and was not able to travel. I wanted to see you on an important matter, my dear lad."

"Will you drop all such honeyed phrases, Peter Trevisa," I said angrily. "I know you lent money to my father on Trevanion. I know I have been a fool since I came into possession. Last night I lost my head. Well, Prideaux shall be paid, and you will take the rest. I quite expect this, and am prepared for it."

"Prideaux has been paid," laughed the old man.

"In cash?"

"Aye, that he has."

"Who paid him?"

"I did."

"Oh, I see. You wanted the bone all to yourself, did you," I cried angrily. "Well, some dogs are like that. But it makes no difference to me. Do your worst."

"You remember this," he said, holding up the piece of paper I had given to Prideaux the night before.

"I was mad when I wrote it," I replied, "but I remember it well. How did it come into your hands?"

"Prideaux has very fine notions about honour," remarked old Peter. "He did not like taking ad-

vantage of it, and yet he knew that you as a Trevanion would insist on his doing so."

"Well?"

"Well, Roger lad, seeing I have the Trevanion deeds, I thought I might as well have this too. So I offered him money down, and he was pleased to arrange the matter that way. He has made the thing over to me."

"Let's see it—his writing ought to be on it to that effect."

"It is; aye, it is."

"Then let me look at it."

"No, Roger. This paper is very precious to me. I dare not let you have it. You might destroy it then."

"Peter Trevisa," I cried, "did ever a Trevanion do a trick like that?"

"No, but you are in a tight corner, and——"

"Listen, you chattering old fool," I cried angrily. "If I wished, I could squeeze the life out of the bodies of both of you and take the paper from you before any one could come to your aid. But that's not my way; give it me."

"I'll trust you, Roger; here it is."

I looked at the paper. I saw my own promise and signature; underneath it was stated that the money had been paid by Peter Trevisa, and signed "Edward Prideaux."

I flung it at him. "There," I said, "you've forged the last link in your chain now. I am quite prepared for what I have no doubt you will do. Trevanion is yours. Well, have it; may it bring you as much joy as it has brought me."

"You misjudge me," cried old Peter. "You misjudge both me and my son. True, Trevanion would be a fine place for my lad, but then I should not like to drive you away from your old home. All the Trevanions would turn in their graves if any one else lived there. I want to be your friend. I desire to help you on to your feet again."

"Wind!" I cried. "Trust you to help any man!"

"Listen to what my father has to say," cried young Peter. "You will see that we both wish to be friendly."

His face was partly hidden; nevertheless I saw the curious light shining from his eyes. He was undersized, this young Peter, just as his father was. A foxy expression was on his face, and his mouth betrayed his nature. He was cunning and sensual. His was not unlike a monkey's face. His forehead receded, his lips were thick, his ears large.

"Roger Trevanion, my lad, there is no reason why you should have to leave your old home. Nay, there is no reason why you should not be better off than you have been. That is why I got this paper from Edward Prideaux."

Old Peter spoke slowly, looking at me from the corner of his eyes.

"You want me to do something," I said after a minute's silence.

"Ah, Roger," laughed the old man, "how quickly you jump at conclusions."

"It will not do, Peter Trevisa," I cried. "You have Trevanion. Well, make the most of it. I

shall not be sorry to be away from the county. The thought that everything has really belonged to you has hung like a millstone around my neck. I am not going to fetch and carry for you."

"But if you had the deeds back. If I burnt this paper. If the estate were unencumbered. What then?"

"You know it will not be. Trust you to give up your pound of flesh."

"You do me an injustice," replied old Peter, with a semblance of righteous indignation. "What right have you to say this? Have I been hard on you. Have I dunned you for your money."

"No; but you have lost no opportunity of letting me know that the place belongs to you."

"That was natural, very natural. I wanted to put a check on your extravagance."

I laughed in his face, for I knew this to be a lie.

"Roger Trevanion," cried young Peter, "my father is a merciful man. He has your welfare at heart. He is old too. Is it manly to mock old age."

"Let there be an end of this," I cried. "I begin to see why you have brought me here. I knew you had some deep-laid plans or I would not have come. It is always interesting to know what such as you think. Well, let's know what it is."

For the moment I seemed master of the situation. An outsider would have imagined them in my power instead of I being in theirs. Especially did young Peter look anxious.

"I am sure we can trust Roger," said the old man. "When a Trevanion gives his word he has never been known to break it."

"But they are learning to be careful how to give their word," I retorted.

Peter looked uneasy. But if I ask you to keep what I tell you a secret, you will promise, Roger?"

"I ask for no confidences," I replied.

"You said just now that we wanted you to do something," said young Peter. "You guessed rightly. If you do not feel inclined to do what we ask you, you will of course respect anything we may tell you?"

"That is but fair," was my answer.

"You promise, then?" cried old Peter.

"If I honourably can," I replied.

For a few seconds both men were silent; then old Peter began to speak again.

"Roger Trevanion," he said, "you know that I hold the deeds of Trevanion; you know that you are entirely at my mercy."

"Well enough."

"You would like to remain at Trevanion? You, a Trevanion, would not like to be an outcast, a mere vagrant, a landless gipsy."

"I don't care much," I replied. "I should be free; and I would rather be landless than be supposed to own the land, while everything practically belonged to you. I've told you this before. Why make me say it again?"

"But you would like the deeds back. You would like to live at the old home with plenty of money?"

"You know I would. Why mock me?"

"You would do a great deal in order that this might come to pass."

"What do you want?"

We had come back to the same point again, and again old Peter hesitated.

"You know Restormel?" he said at length.

"Restormel Castle, up by Lostwithiel?" I asked.

"No; Restormel in the parish of St. Miriam, a few miles north from here?"

"Oh, yes, I know."

"What do you know?"

Both old Peter and young Peter spoke in the same breath; both spoke eagerly, too—anxiously in fact.

"What is rumoured by certain gossips," I replied. "I expect there is no truth in it."

"But what have you heard?"

"It is said that the estate belongs to a chit of a maid," I replied; "that the maid's mother died at her birth, and that her father, Godfrey Molesworth, did not long survive her. That he was broken-hearted. That everything was left to a mere baby."

"But what became of the baby?"

"I know not. I have heard that she has never been seen on the place, although her father has been dead wellnigh twenty years. That the rents are paid to Colman Killigrew who lives at Endellion Castle, and who is a godless old savage. Rumour says that he claims to be the maid's guardian. But of this I am ignorant. He lives full fifty miles from here, and I know nothing of him."

"That is all you have heard?"

"That is all I can remember at present."

"You have never seen the maid?"

"No. Who has? Stay; I have heard she was placed in a convent school. Old Killigrew is a Catholic, I suppose."

"I'll tell you more, Roger Trevanion. Colman Killigrew has been fattening on the Restormel lands for wellnigh twenty years. He hath kept the maid, Nancy Molesworth, a prisoner. In a few months she will be twenty-one. He intends marrying her to one of his sons. She hates the whole tribe of Killigrews, but he cares nothing for that. He is determined; you can guess why."

"Yes, such things are common. But what is that to me? I know nothing of the maid, Nancy Molesworth; I do not care. Let the Killigrews marry her; let them possess Restormel."

"My son Peter hath seen the maid, Roger."

"Ah! How?"

"He had to pay a visit in the neighbourhood of Endellion Castle, and he saw her by chance."

"Spoke he to her?"

"No, he did not; she did not see him. She is kept a close prisoner, but my Peter hath lost his heart."

I turned and looked at young Peter, and his face looked more monkeyish than ever. A simpering smile played around his protruding mouth. His eyes shone like those of a weazel.

"Well," I said, "what is this to me?"

"This, Roger Trevanion. I want that maid, Nancy Molesworth, brought here to Treviscoe. I

want to save her from those Papist savages who would bring ruin upon the maid and upon the country."

"That's nothing to me," I replied; "I avoid women. They are all alike—all cruel, all selfish, all false as hell. Why tell your plans to me?"

"Because," cried young Peter, "if you will bring the sweet maid, Nancy Molesworth, to Treviscoe, you shall have the Trevanion deeds back. I will destroy this paper you gave to Prideaux, and we will forgive a large part of the money you have had from us." And he named a fairly liberal sum.

CHAPTER III.

CROSSING THE RUBICON.

I MUST confess to being startled by this proposal. I had not foreseen it. That I should have to do with any woman formed no part of my plans. As I have said, I hated women; I had not forgotten the lesson I had learnt as a lad. Hence the suddenness of his proposal took me somewhat aback.

But I did not betray my feelings. Instead I walked quietly around the room, occasionally glancing at the two men who watched me closely.

"If I refuse to do this," I said presently, "you will of course make good your claims on Trevanion?"

Both nodded.

"And if I consent, you will in payment for my services destroy the paper I gave to Prideaux,

give me back the deeds, and forgive the amount you mentioned?"

"I will have papers drawn up to that effect," replied old Peter in honeyed tones. "I will always be a friend to you, and render you any little services in my power. You are but thirty-two. Think what a gay life you could live!"

I saw what was in his mind. He thought I should continue my spendthrift habits, and that as a natural consequence he would soon possess the deeds again. But I said nothing. There was no need that I should. Besides at that moment I felt a great desire to stay at Trevanion, and I formed a resolution that if ever I got the deeds, I would never let them go out of my possession again.

The matter required thinking about; and heedless of the inquiries I still paced Treviscoe library, trying the while to read the two Trevisas' motives, and understand the whole bearings of the case. I was not long in forming conclusions.

"The Restormel estates are valuable, I suppose?" I said at length.

"There is some very good land on it?" replied old Peter. "Molesworth harbour is in it."

"Just so; and you mean that young Peter should marry this maid?" I continued.

"And what then?" cried old Peter. "That's naught to you. You hate all women, you say. You care not what may become of her if you have your deeds back, and become a prosperous man?"

"No!" I replied, shrugging my shoulders. "I

care not"; and yet I felt uneasy, I knew not why.

"Besides the maid hates the Killigrews, hates 'em!"

"How do you know?"

"I've found out."

I must confess I did not like the work. The idea that I should take a maid barely twenty-one from the man claiming to be her guardian, and bring her to Treviscoe, the home of these two Trevisas, was repellent to me. I was not over-particular what I did as a rule, but this caused a nasty taste in my mouth. This Nancy Molesworth might marry young Peter, crawling ugly worm as he was, that was nothing to me; what matter it who women married? He might have the Restormel lands too, if he could get them. Still, although I had given myself pretty much over to the devil during the last few years, I did not like the thought that a Trevanion should do the dirty work of a Trevisa.

Had they told me all? Why should they select me for this mission? And why should they be willing to pay such a big price? There were plenty of gangs of cut-throats in Cornwall who would do their bidding for a less sum.

"You had better place this affair in other hands," I said at length.

"Haven't we offered enough?" cried young Peter.

"It's too dear at any price, I am afraid," I replied, and yet my heart went out toward Trevanion as I spoke.

"You are prepared to give up your old home, discharge your old servants, and become nameless then?" old Peter said, his ferrety eyes fastened on me all the while.

"Others would do it cheaper," I replied; "far cheaper. Tom Belowda's gang would attempt the work for a hundred guineas."

Young Peter lost his head as I spoke. "Could I trust the sweet maid with a gang of roughs?" he cried; "besides, we should place ourselves in their power, they would know our secrets."

"It would pay them not to tell."

"Aye, but a secret held by such ceases to be a secret."

I saw that my game was to hold back, and I continued to do so. The thought of retaining Trevanion grew dearer each minute, but I did not let them know.

"It's a difficult task," I suggested, still continuing to pace the room.

"Not so difficult for such as you," said old Peter coaxingly. "When you Trevanions make up your mind to do a thing you do it, although the furies stand in your way. You are as strong as a horse and if need be could fight like a fiend from the bottomless pit. Not that there would be any need," he added quickly.

"If it is so easy," I retorted, "let young Peter do this himself. He says he loves this maid, and love," I laughed sneeringly, "overcomes all difficulties. This is just the work for a lover. It smacks of far-off days. Let Peter attack the castle like the knights of past ages, and bear off his

bride in triumph. He would make a fine sight carrying a maid on his crupper."

I saw a look of vindictive hatred shine from young Peter's eyes, but he said nothing.

"Peter is not fit for such work," was the old man's reply. "He was delicate from a child. Riding wearies him, he has neither the strength nor the daring necessary."

"You say that Killigrew has sons?" I said at length, a new thought flashing into my mind.

"Yes."

"Many?"

"Five."

"Be they weaklings like you, or strong fighting men?" I said, turning to young Peter.

"Strong men, giants," he said quickly, and then he tried to qualify his words as though he were afraid that difficulties would hinder me.

For the first time I found pleasure in the thought of accepting the mission. It fired my blood to think of doing battle with these sturdy Killigrews. They were Papists too, and I had been taught to hate them from my childhood. I longed for some reckless work to do. At first it had seemed tame and mean to carry away a chit of a maid from Endellion Castle, and take her to Treviscoe, that she might become the wife of Peter Trevisa. I surmised, too, that young Peter thought quite as much of Restormel as he did of the maid. But to go into a house where there were five young fellows who were giants, and take away a maid who was closely guarded, aroused all my love for adventure.

"What is this Endellion Castle?" I asked. "Is it one of the old Cornish fortresses?"

"Part of the castle still stands," replied young Peter. "The grandfather of the present Colman Killigrew built the present house adjoining it."

"It is well guarded, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied young Peter reluctantly. "Colman Killigrew and all his sons are rebels at heart. In his father's days he and his family supported King James; they long for a Catholic to be on the throne, and there is a rumour that they are planning against our good King George."

"Hath anything been proved against them?"

"No, not proved, but matters look suspicious. Rumour saith, that should there be a rebellion he could command five hundred swords. There is a strong Papist feeling in the neighbourhood of Endellion."

"And the maid, is she a Papist?"

"Her father, Godfrey Molesworth, was a strong Protestant, but Heaven only knows what they have persuaded her to be."

This information caused new thoughts to come into my mind, and I determined to remember what he had told me.

"Are Colman Killigrew and his sons beloved by the neighbouring families?" I asked presently.

"He is both beloved and hated. Some of the Catholics are his friends, but others mistrust him sorely."

These matters came out slowly. Evidently young Peter did not care about discussing them. Perchance he was afraid lest I should shrink

from trying to carry out his plans when I knew them.

I was silent for some time. I pondered much over what I had heard.

"All this should be nothing to thee, Roger, lad," said old Peter, becoming more and more familiar in his tones. "All the Trevanions for many generations have sought to help the oppressed. Thou hast the blood of thy fathers within thee. This is work worthy of the best. Besides, if thou wilt do this, both Peter and myself will befriend thee always. Peter's heart went out after the maid, and he longed to set her free. She is suffering, Roger, suffering greatly. Killigrew will rob her, and sell her to one of his brutal sons. Such a work as we asked will win the blessing of Heaven."

"Have done with this Quaker talk!" I cried. "I care nothing about such things. Perchance the maid will be better off where she is than with you; perchance, too, one of these Killigrews will make a better husband for her than your puling lad."

"Nay, think not so," cried the old man; "Peter is a good lad, weak in body, but quick in thinking, and hath a kind heart."

"I like a fight," I blurted out; "I do not object to a rough bit of work, but——" I mused.

"But what, Roger, lad?"

"I hate aught that hath to do with women. This matter presents many difficulties. I must get to speak with the maid, if she be as you say. If not, I must carry her off by force. Anyway I shall have a wench on my hand for days. I dis-

like this. I am no woman's man, and I should repel her by my roughness."

Peter's eyes glistened. "But you would be kind to her?" he asked eagerly.

"Kind!" I replied. "I would always treat a helpless maid with respect. No man who is a man could be cruel to these poor things, who cannot fight for themselves. Still one cannot trust women. Mostly they would betray a man at a pinch even though he were fighting for their welfare."

"That is why we are anxious to have such a man as you to help us," cried old Peter. "If we gave this to some, my lad would be eating his heart away with jealousy. He would think they would be plotting to take her away from him. But you, Roger, you have been badly treated by women, therefore——"

"I should pay them scant courtesy," I interrupted.

"I know a Trevanion would always treat a well-born maid as she should be treated. Besides——"

"Besides what?"

"If you promise to bring the maid here, you will bring her."

"Yes," I replied grimly, "if I promise."

"You are as clever as a lawyer, and strong as a horse," wheedled old Peter, "and a Trevanion always keeps his promise."

To this I vouchsafed no reply, but I saw the old man's purpose in trying to flatter me.

"Will your promise?" cried young Peter at length, after much more talk.

I considered the matter again. I thought of the Trevanion deeds, and the forgiveness of half the debts my father had contracted. On the other hand, I pictured myself going into the world a landless wanderer, after having turned all the old servants adrift. It was not pleasant. Then I tried to realize the work these two Trevisas wanted me to do. Should I bring a maid, badly as she might be treated by the Killigrews (and I much doubted this portion of their narrative), a maid well born and beauteous, to be the wife of a crawling worm like young Peter Trevisa? But this did not trouble me much. What did I care who she married? Killigrew, a giant cut-throat, or Trevisa, a weak-chested, knocked-kneed, sensual little vermin?—it mattered not. Neither did I trouble much as to who possessed the Restormel lands. Still I was a Trevanion, and a Trevanion hates dirty work—at least of that kind.

On the other hand, I loved adventure. The thought of spiting these Killigrews and taking the maid from them, even though I knew little of them, except that they were Papists, stirred my blood. True I did not understand all the motives of the Trevisas in selecting me to do this work, but that did not matter. I doubted much if the maid would consent to marry young Peter, although I brought her to Treviscoe. That, however, was not my business. Old Peter regarded his son as a handsome man, with brains enough for two; I knew him to be a flat-chested, ugly weakling with plenty of cunning.

"Have you made up your mind?" asked old Peter at length.

"Yes," I cried.

"You will undertake the work?"

"On conditions."

He got up from his seat and held out his hand to me. "Let's shake hands on it," he cried.

"Not yet," I replied; "I must name my conditions first."

"Well, what are they, Roger, lad? Don't be unreasonable."

"First," I replied, "this business will need money. It may take many weeks. I know not what will happen to me on the way. I must not go to Endellion a moneyless man."

"We have thought of that," replied young Peter; "there are a hundred guineas in this bag."

"That is well," I replied; "it is a stingy allowance, but it may suffice. The next condition I make is, that you draw up a writing stating what you have just promised me."

"It shall be done."

"Then send for Mr. Hendy, my attorney, without delay."

"Why?"

"That it may be placed in his hands."

"I—I cannot consent to that," cried old Peter. "I want no other person to know our plans. I will keep the paper safely, lad, quiet safely."

I thought I saw his cunning now. If they kept the agreement, I should be quite powerless to claim my own, even if I did my work. I saw,

too, why they were so willing to offer liberal terms.

"If you refuse, I refuse," I replied. "I stake everything on this, Peter Trevisa. If I fail to bring that maid here to Treviscoe, it will mean that I am a dead man, for I swear that I will not give up while I am alive. If I promise, I promise." This I said firmly, for I knew the danger which attended my work.

"But I will do right, you may trust me," wheedled the old man.

"Maybe," I replied; "do as I say, or I refuse. I simply demand that you write the matter down and sign it. On conditions that I bring the maid, Nancy Molesworth, to Treviscoe, within two months, you give me back the Trevanion deeds, the paper I gave Prideaux, and a declaration that you forgive me the money you mentioned. If I do not bring the maid here in that time, it shall be returned to you, and you can destroy it."

He tried to wriggle out of this, and brought forward as many objections as if he were a lawyer. But I did not yield, and so at length, doubtless believing they would be able to get the better of me, even if I succeeded in my mission, he promised.

"Let us send for Lawyer Hendy at once, and then the matter will be settled," he said, as though he were thinking of means whereby he could keep me in his power.

"Not yet," I said; "there is yet another condition."

"No, no!" he cried; "I have made no more conditions."

"This will have to be complied with," I replied with a laugh, for to see these men yielding to my terms made me merry.

"What more do you want?" asked old Peter after many words.

"I demand that Lawyer Hendy shall manage Trevanion while I am away," I said. "If I do not return in two months you may conclude that I am dead. In that case I demand that certain sums of money be given to the servants who have served our family for many years." These sums I named, also the servants to whom they were to be given.

"I agree to the first part of the condition, not the second," cried old Peter.

"Why?" I asked. "Do you expect me to fail? Do you think I shall be killed? Is the expedition so dangerous? A little while ago you said it was very easy, and that I should be sure to succeed."

"But it is not fair," whined he. "In that case I should lose much money for nothing."

"And I risk everything. You will have to do this only in case of my death. I may lose my life, and you refuse to lose a few paltry guineas."

"I tell you I will not!" he cried.

"Very well, then you may get some one else to do your work."

"Then I will have Trevanion. Every stick, every field, every jot and tittle will be mine, and you will have to leave the county a vagrant," shrieked the old man.

"No," I said firmly. "I will go to Endellion on my own account. Possibly the maid might bring me fortune."

"But you promised you would not," pleaded young Peter.

"I promised nothing of the sort. I said I would tell no man. Neither will I."

"But you hate women," he continued; "you have refused your lawyer to marry a woman with money, even although it might save your estates!"

I laughed aloud, for this speech was uttered in a whining, yet savage way, just like a dog who is afraid whines, showing its teeth all the time.

"I did not know then what I know now," I said with glee, for it was a pleasant thing to see these scheming money-grubs having the worst of a game.

They wriggled and twisted finely for some time, and then consented, as I knew they would, for I saw from the beginning that they had concocted a scheme which would mean much profit to them. Besides I believe that young Peter was really much in love with the maid Nancy Molesworth. So Lawyer Hendy was sent for, old Peter trying to ply me with wine the meanwhile. In this he did not succeed, however, for I felt I must not lose my head, and thus be led to do foolish things.

We drew up the papers as I had stipulated; they were signed by both Peter and his son, and Lawyer Hendy was given full instructions.

On leaving, I took the money old Peter had offered me and counted it carefully.

"You will do your best, Roger; you will not break your promise?" he said tremulously.

"I do not break promises," I replied.

"When will you start?"

"To-morrow morning!"

"God bless you, Roger."

"I am not sure He can while I do your work," I replied.

CHAPTER IV.

MY JOURNEY TO ENDELLION.

The next morning I started to ride to the home of the Killigrews. I could see that Daniel sorely wanted to accompany me, but I decided not to take him. In nine cases out of ten a man does work better when unencumbered. Mostly people who pretend to help fail to understand what is in one's mind, and as a consequence generally bungle things grievously. I did not want this matter bungled. The more I thought about it the more was I determined to see the thing through successfully. The picture of living at Trevanion, practically unharassed by debts, became more pleasant each hour. Besides as a race we were not given to bungling, and although I was little in love with the thought of having a maid for a companion, I gloried in the prospect of measuring wits, and if needs be swords, with these sturdy Killigrews. I therefore mounted my favourite horse which I called "Chestnut," on account of his colour; a horse the like of which was difficult

to be matched. He was going five, stood over sixteen hands high, and was of a build which united strength with speed to such a degree that half the squires in the county wanted him. I had been sorely tempted to sell him, but had never yielded to the temptation. I had always prided myself on riding the best horse in the county, and Chestnut was certainly second to none. In spite of my unusual weight he carried me easily, he would run until he dropped, and possessed tremendous staying power. Added to this, I had seen him foaled, had fed him with my own hands, and when Jenkins, the famous horse-breaker, declared to me his inability to "break him in," I had undertaken the task myself, and had succeeded. I did it by a new method, too, for I never struck him a blow. I do not attribute this to any special power I possess over horses generally, for Jenkins would in nine cases out of ten succeed where I failed. The truth was, Chestnut, when he was a colt, regarded me as a sort of play-fellow and learnt to love me. Being an intelligent animal, he soon understood me, indeed he had a curious instinct by which he seemed to divine my thoughts and feelings. I carefully armed myself, and placed in my saddle-bags as much ammunition as I could conveniently carry. I did not know whether I should stand in need of these things, but I thought it well to be prepared. The county was infested by robbers, and as I carried a large amount of money I thought it well to test my sword-blade and pistols. Thus equipped I had no fear. I was

a fair shot, and generally held as a strong swordsman.

"When may I expect 'ee back then, sur, makin' so bold?" asked Daniel as I mounted.

"I don't know, Daniel; don't expect me until you see me. As you know, I have given you full particulars, and Mr. Hendy will visit you constantly."

"You be goin' into danger, Master Roger," said the serving-man tremulously. "Laive me go weth 'ee, sur."

Daniel was nearly fifty years of age, and had served our family all his life, so he had been allowed to take liberties.

"Ould Smiler es jist aitin his 'ead off, sur, and I baint no good 'ere when you be gone. Taake me weth 'ee, sur. You wa'ant be sorry."

As I said, I did not think it best to take him, so I rode away leaving him disconsolate. On my way to the home of the Killigrews I passed through Truro, Tresillian, Ladock, and Mitchell, but nothing happened worthy of note. I did not hurry, rather I rode slowly, for I wanted to enjoy the quiet of the day. Everywhere new life was appearing. Everywhere, too, the spirit of rest seemed to reign. In those days I did not think much about the beauties of early spring, but I could not help being impressed by the scene around Tresillian. The little arm of the river enclosed by wooded hills was indeed fair to look upon. I rested my horse at the gates of Tregothnan, where the Boscawens lived and looked with somewhat envious eyes on the long line of yew-trees which bordered the drive, and remembered

that I had once loved the maid who was related to the people who dwelt in the great house in the distance.

I did not get beyond St. Columb that day, and, on arriving there, tried to find out something about the Killigrews. I had not gone far enough north, however. The main branch of the family, as all the country knows, had lived at St. Erme, about five miles north of Truro, also at Falmouth, but it had died out. Colman Killigrew was the descendant of one Benet Killigrew, who, although he did not, like some of his relations, become a courtier, was sufficiently fortunate to marry a Mistress Scobell Rosecarrick, of Endellion, in which Endellion Castle was situated. Through her this branch of the Killigrews became possessed of a pleasant estate, and also became allied to an ancient race. This I had learnt by reading Carew's survey of Cornwall after I had returned from Peter Trevisa. Of their present condition, however, I knew nothing, neither could I discover anything about them at St. Columb.

Arriving at Wadebridge the next day, my attention was attracted by an inn called "The Molesworth Arms." As the name of the maid I had promised to take from Endellion to Treviscoe was Molesworth, and as it was moreover the chief inn in the town, I decided to rest there and partake of some refreshment. Although it was scarcely noon, I found the common room of the inn filled with a number of people. Mostly the occupants were farmers, although I fancied one or two of them belonged to the gentlefolk of the neigh-

bourhood. I did not pay particular attention to them, however, because my interest became centred in a hale-looking old man, who was evidently a travelling story-teller and minstrel. He had finished his singing, and was now telling a story before taking his departure. There is no need that I should repeat the tale here; at the same time I mention the incident because I was impressed by the wondrous way he had of making us all look at him. One could have heard a pin drop when he was speaking. I was fascinated by him too, partly, I expect, because I did not understand him. As all the county knows, a tale-teller, or a wandering singer, who is usually called "a droll," is no unusual thing. Many of them had visited Trevanion, and I had always given them food and a bed. Mostly they came when the house was full of visitors, and regaled the company with song and story. But they were mostly of the lower orders of life, and spoke the Cornish dialect. Indeed their stories usually had but little charm apart from the dialect, although occasionally tales were told which were interesting because of their subject-matter. These were generally of a supernatural order, and described the dead arising or spirits coming back to the world to bring some message to their friends. I had never seen this man at Trevanion, however, neither did he belong to the class who had visited the house. It is true he spoke the Cornish dialect, but at times he let words drop which showed he knew something of learning. He had an air of authority with him, too, which suggested that

he lived on terms of equality with men of position. At least this was what I thought.

He paid no attention to me, save to give me one glance, and when he had finished his story said he must move on.

"Stay till even', Uncle Anthony," said the innkeeper, "do 'ee now. A passel of people will be comin.' "

"No," replied Uncle Anthony, "I have promised to be twelve miles away by to-night, so I mus' be goin.' "

"Tich yer 'arp afore you go, Uncle," pleaded the innkeeper.

"I sha'ant, I tell 'ee," replied Anthony.

A number of coins were thrown to the droll, and then shouldering his harp he left the inn.

"'Ee's a cure es Uncle Anthony," said the innkeeper, turning to me; 'ee es for sure, sur."

"Who is he?" I asked. "He does not seem like a common droll."

"He ed'n for sure, sur. I've 'eerd that Uncle do come of a rich family, but law, you ca'ant git nothin' from un. Everybody es glad to zee un. He's a clain off zinger, and can play butiful, 'ee can. Which way ded you cum then, sur, makin' sa bould."

"From southward," I replied.

"Far, sur?"

"From Truro."

"Aw, I thot you wos a bit of a furriner. I cud zee you ded'n belong to thaise paarts. Goin' fur, sur?"

"Probably to Bodmin town," I replied, for I did

not feel like taking the talkative innkeeper into my confidence.

"Aw, Uncle Anthony es well knawed in thais paarts, 'ee es for sure. And 'ee d' knaw a lot too. Wot Uncle doan knaw ed'n much use to nobody."

I stayed at the inn till late in the afternoon, during which time I plied the innkeeper with many questions, but I learnt nothing about the Killigrews more than I had hitherto discovered; then I mounted Chestnut and rode towards Endellion, in which parish the maid Nancy Molesworth lived.

I could not help noticing what a pretty spot Wadebridge was as I rode over the bridge, after which the town was called. The tide was high, and several good-sized vessels lay at the riverside. But I had naught to do with them, so stopping only to take a glance at the river as it broadened out towards Padstow, and again in the other direction as its waters lapped the banks near the little village of Egloshayle, I rode on towards St. Minver.

It must be remembered that it was the twenty-sixth day of March, and so daylight began to fade soon after six o'clock, and as I wanted to reach the home of the Killigrews before dark, I rode rapidly. I puzzled my brains sorely to know by what pretext I could enter the house, also under what name I should present myself. I dared not tell them that I was a Trevanion, for my people were well known. We were well known to the Killigrews who had lived at Pendennis Castle,

also to those who possessed a place a few miles from Truro. Moreover, all the Trevanions were stout Protestants, and as Colman Killigrew and his sons were rank Papists, I dared not appear to them under this guise. My pride rebelled against assuming a false name and professing a false religion, but I had promised Peter Trevisa, and as in those days I was not over-particular about such matters I vowed to let nothing stand in the way of my seeing the business through.

My purpose was to stay at Endellion several days, else how could I accomplish my mission? In order to do this I must in some way establish some claim upon the owner thereof. There would be no difficulty in staying one night, or even two, for the laws of Cornish hospitality made this easy. No house of importance would close its doors to a traveller, be he rich or poor. I determined, therefore, to pretend that I was a member of an obscure branch of the Penryn family, who were well known to be Catholics; that I was the owner of a small Barton, and that I was anxious to see a Catholic king on the throne of England. That I had heard rumours of the probability of the grandson of King James coming to England, and that could a leader be found I might render assistance to the Catholic cause.

Beyond this I decided upon nothing. If questions were asked me, I must trust to my wits. I determined to keep a cool head and open eyes. If the worst came to the worst I could fight with the best, indeed I rather hoped for difficult work.

Presently I saw the tower of Endellion Church.

It was on a little hillside, while all around the country was bare, as far as trees were concerned. I rode towards the little village, and seeing a strapping maid, I stopped and spoke to her.

"Do you know where Squire Killigrew lives, my pretty maid?" I asked.

She laughed in my face, revealing fine white teeth and shining blue eyes.

"Iss, sur. Endellion."

"This is Endellion, is it not?" I said, pointing to the church.

"This is the Church Town, this is. Endellion es dree miles from we, right over ginst the say."

"The Killigrews live there, you say? Do you know them?"

"Knaw 'em. Who doan't?"

"I don't, but I want to see them."

The maid stared at me as though she were afraid, then she said almost fearfully.

"Doan't 'ee knaw 'em?"

"No," I replied.

"Do they knaw you?"

"No."

"Then doan't 'ee go, sur. They'll kill 'ee, sur. They be terble, sur. They taake no noatice of the passon, nor the bible, sur."

I saw that the maid was in earnest. No one was near, for I had not entered the village, so I dismounted and stood by her side.

"You seem a good maid," I said, "and I believe you would not tell a lie. What know you of these Killigrews?"

"I'm feared to tell 'ee, sur. Nearly everybody

es feared to go there. The 'ouse es full ov rubbers. Say rubbers, and land rubbers. People miles round 'ave bin rubbed, and murdered, and people do zay tes they. But we ca'ant tell. And everybody es feared to tackle 'em. They be fighters, terble fighters. Some ov 'em do ride ere zumtimes like maazed people. Doan't 'ee go 'mong 'em, sur, doan't 'ee now.

"Yes, I must go."

"Then taake care ov yezelf, sur. You be very big and strong, sur; and do car a sword. But doan't 'ee vex 'em."

"I'll be careful. Is that all you know?"

"That's oall, sur."

"And yonder is the road?" I said, pointing northwards.

"Iss, sur, that's ev et."

I gave the maid a crown piece and a kiss, whereupon she blushed finely, but curtsied like one well reared, as I believe she was.

"Whan you git to the crossways, sur, turn to the right. The left road do laid to Rosecarrick. Do 'ee be careful, sur, an' doan't 'ee vex 'em."

I laughed as I mounted my horse. "I'll remember," I said; "what is your name, my maid?"

"Jennifer Lanteglos, sur," and she curtsied again as I rode away.

"Evidently Jennifer Lanteglos is afraid of the Killigrews," I thought as I rode away. It was now becoming dusk, but I felt sure I could easily cover the three miles before dark. I had not gone a mile, when I saw a man tramping along the lane. I stopped as I overtook him. I saw that he

was the droll I had seen at Molesworth Arms at Wadebridge.

"Uncle Anthony," I said, using the term I had heard the innkeeper use, for the term "uncle" is one of respect towards elderly people, "go you my way?"

"What a question," retorted the old man. "How do I know ef you doan't tell me where you be goin'?"

"I am going to Squire Colman Killigrew's at Endellion," I replied.

"Do 'ee think you'll git in?" laughed Uncle Anthony.

"Yes," I replied, "the Killigrews are of an old Cornish family, they will give shelter to a traveller."

He eyed me keenly. "A traveller! Ugh! a purty traveller. But doan't 'ee be sa sure of gittin' into Endellion!"

"Go you there?"

"Iss," he replied.

"Then if you can get shelter, why not I?"

"I—I?" he retorted sharply. "I go everywhere. Nobody 'll zay no to ould Ant'ny. I zing, an' tell taales, an' shaw 'em wizard's tricks, I do."

"Then if we go as fellow-travellers, both will be taken in."

"I zeed 'ee at Wadebridge," he said. "You come from a long way off, you do. Wa's yer name, young squire?"

"Roger Penryn."

"Penryn, Penryn," he repeated the name slow-

ly, and looked at me again. "Iss, we'll be fellow-travellers. I'll take 'ee to Endellion."

I did not understand his behaviour, but I determined to make the best use of him that I could. The innkeeper at Wadebridge had told me that every house was open to Uncle Anthony, for in country places where entertainment was scarce he was regarded as a godsend.

"You look tired, Uncle," I said; "get on my horse, and ride the remaining distance."

He did not speak, but when I had dismounted he prepared to climb on to Chestnut.

"It's a long time since I was on the back of a 'oss like this," he remarked when he was seated.

"And you would not remain long on," I replied, "if I was not here to keep Chestnut in order."

He opened his mouth as if to contradict me sharply, but seeming to think better of it, simply asked me to hand his harp to him.

"I can carry it," I assured him.

"No one carries that harp but me," he replied sharply; "the devil wud git into un, if other hands than mine did hould un."

So I handed him the instrument, more and more puzzled at his manner of speech. I walked slowly by Chestnut's head, who seemed to resent his change of rider, but a word from me kept him quiet, after which no conversation took place till I saw a large stone gateway.

"What's yon?" I asked Anthony.

"The gateway to the place where the Killigrews do live," he replied.

I had hardly opened the gate when I heard a

tramping of feet and a hurried sound of voices near. Immediately a rough hand was laid on my arm, and I saw that we were surrounded by several men. It was now nearly dark, and I could not well distinguish who had attacked us. Bidding Chestnut be still I freed myself in a moment, and drew my sword.

"No," cried Uncle Anthony. "Doan't 'ee knaw me, Clement Killigrew; doan't 'ee knaw Uncle Anthony, Benet, Colman?"

"Down," cried a strong deep voice. "Uncle Anthony on horseback! What means this?"

"Visitors to Endellion, Benet; a supper and a bed!" replied the droll.

"A supper and bed for thee, and welcome, Uncle Anthony," was the reply, "but for this jackanapes,—no, we keep no open house for such."

"Jackanapes yourself," I cried hotly, for I could ill brook such words. "You carry swords, come on then one at a time, and we will see who is a jackanapes."

But no swords were drawn. Instead they looked at me keenly.

"Is this horse thine?"

"It is."

"Why let old Uncle Anthony ride on him then?"

"That is my affair, not yours."

"Know you to whom you speak?"

"I thought I did at first. I was told that this is the entrance to Colman Killigrew's house, and I thought you might be Killigrews. But they be

gentlemen, and know decent ways, so I judge you cannot be they."

A general laugh followed this sally, and then one of them spoke in low tones to Uncle Anthony.

"We have been mistaken," said one presently. "If you bear the name of Penryn, come to Endellion, and welcome. We may know your business later on. But we live a rough life here, and make not friends easily."

"But they be cutthroats, footpads, who attack a man unawares," I replied.

"And we be Killigrews, Roger Penryn, for such is the name Uncle Anthony says you have given," was the reply. "We mistook our man, that is all, and beg to tender our apologies for discourteous treatment. We think all the better of you for drawing your sword. But put it up, man, we will conduct you to Endellion. At the same time you must confess that it is not oft that a gentleman dismounts and lets a wandering tale-teller sit on his horse."

"The old man was tired, and——" I did not finish the sentence, for I had become cool again, and I knew I had a difficult game to play, if I would get the better of these wild fellows.

I could not see their faces, but I saw they were strong, well-built men. They carried themselves well, too, and did not slouch along as country squires often do.

Presently I heard the roar of the sea, and soon after saw the dim outline of a large castellated building. Here and there lights twinkled, but

altogether it was as gloomy a place as one could well conceive.

"We give you a welcome at Endellion," said one of the Killigrews who had not hitherto spoken. "We be a rough branch of the old family tree, but the same blood flows through our veins."

Some one gave a shrill whistle and a serving-man appeared.

"Take this horse, and see that it is well curry-combed and foddered," was the command.

A minute later, I with the others entered the old house from which, if I accomplished my purpose, I was to take the maid called Nancy Molesworth. My blood tingled at the thought of wild adventure; all the same, as I saw these sturdy men by my side, I very much doubted the outcome of the business.

CHAPTER V.

MY FIRST NIGHT AT ENDELLION.

I HAD barely time to take note of the house on entering. In the dim light I could just see the grim gray walls on the outside and the great hall within. But nothing appeared to me with distinctness. The strident voices of the Killigrews had the effect of making me keep my hand on the hilt of my sword. I remember, too, that my heart beat faster than its wont, while both my eyes and ears seemed preternaturally sharp. Nowhere was a woman to be seen, and al-

though I was no lover of women, especially of those who belong to that class with which my people mated, I felt that a house filled with rough men was no desirable residence for a gentlewoman.

Presently I was ushered into the dining-hall, a huge oak-paneled room. At the head of the table sat an old man. He had long white hair and beard, and beneath his rugged forehead, and overshadowed by bristling eyebrows, gleamed a pair of piercing black eyes. He arose as I entered, and I saw that he was well on towards seventy. "A warm welcome, Roger Penryn," he said. "From what I hear my sons played a rough game at the gates yonder. I am sorry for this. The truth is, they thought that the Hanson varlets were playing them a trick. But enough of that. A man of your stamp bears no ill-will because of a mistake."

He kept his eyes on me all the time he spoke as if he would read my very soul, and I winced at the thought that I appeared under an assumed name, for I hate fighting an under-handed battle. At the same time I was sure that had I appeared as a Trevanion, I should have been ill-received.

"It is but little wonder in these rough times, that suspicion is aroused," I said. "There are many rumours of treason afloat in my part of the country. Indeed, Hugh Boscawen is reported to be raising an army to put down a rebellion there at this time."

He nodded his head, still eyeing me keenly.

"Know you Hugh Boscawen?" he asked.

"Not well," I replied, "but I have seen him."

"And have thought of joining his ranks?" he asked.

"Nay, a Penryn strikes not a blow for the House of Hanover, when the real King of England is perhaps eating his heart away in France, yonder."

"Ah, say you so?" he cried eagerly. He seemed to be about to say more, but checked himself. "We will not talk of these things now," he said; "perchance when you have been here a few hours we can discuss such matters. Besides, here come my sons. You are a strapping fellow, Roger Penryn, but methinks my Benet is taller."

A servant entered bearing a huge haunch of beef, another followed bearing other things, and then all being ready we fell to right heartily.

Old Colman Killigrew talked pleasantly with me as we ate, and when the meal was over he pressed wine upon me. But I had passed the age of hot-blooded boyhood, and, knowing the work I had to do, drank cautiously, for a man filled with wine has a loose tongue and an unwary head.

"Hath old Uncle Anthony supped?" asked Colman Killigrew presently. "Let him come in when he is ready."

I was glad to have the old man say this, for I was becoming weary of the talk of the young Killigrews. They drank freely, and grew heedless as to the language they used. For, careless as I was in those days, I loved not to hear men speak of maidens as though they were brute

beasts. I have also discovered that men, when they live away from the society of women altogether, grow churlish. I had seen this in my own life, although I had not fallen so low as these men of Endellion.

One among these sons, however, was different from the rest. He was neither tall nor handsome like his brothers. I discovered that he was called Otho, after an ancient member of the race, and seemed to be regarded as the wise-man of the family. He had more learning too than the others, and spoke with more taste. He was not pleasant to look upon; he had a short bull-neck, and there was a round upon his back which almost approached a hump. I saw, however, that his hands were large and his wrists thick. Moreover, his legs, while ill-shaped, were thickset and evidently powerful. He did not drink freely like the others, nor did he talk much, but he watched me closely.

When Uncle Anthony entered, I noticed that he was regarded with great respect. He had evidently visited the house often, and knew the ways of the inmates. He had a seat of honour beside old Colman Killigrew too, and they conversed together in low tones, while the sons plied me with questions about my life in the South.

Presently a number of the serving people came in, and with them three women-folk. They were ill-favoured, however, not like the kitchen maiden I had kept at Trevanion. Two out of the three were past mid-age, too, while the third was a large-limbed wench, angular and awkward, but

evidently as strong as a man. So far, not a sign of Nancy Molesworth was visible.

"Now, Uncle Anthony, a song and a story!" cried Otho Killigrew.

"Shall it be a little zong or a little stoary first, then?" asked Uncle Anthony in broad Cornish.

"A song first, then a story, and then a galloping song and dance to finish up with," replied Otho.

Uncle Anthony swept his eyes quickly around the room; then, standing up he, bowed towards Colman Killigrew.

"I drink the 'ealth of the 'ouse," he said, bending towards the owner of Endellion. "The Killigrews 'ave been called 'A grove ov aigels' (eagles); they 'ave flied 'igh; they 'ave stood avore kings, they 'ave. Ther've bin wisht times laately, but a better day es comin'. The raace 'ave allays bin great fer lovin' and drinkin' and fightin', and their sun es risin' again. I can zee et."

"May it come quickly!" cried Benet, a giant of a fellow. "There are no women to love around here—they are afraid of us; but drinking is always good; as for fighting, I long for the clash of steel."

All the brothers echoed this, save Otho; he looked steadily into the huge fireplace, and spoke not. From that moment I felt sure that he was the one selected to wed Nancy Molesworth.

Uncle Anthony touched his harp-strings and began to sing a plaintive song. I had heard it often before; but he sung with more feeling than did the drolls who had visited Trevanion. It was

moreover peculiar to Cornwall, and, interspersed as it was by Uncle Anthony's explanations, caused even the hard-featured serving-women of Endellion to wipe their eyes. I will write it down here, for the song is being forgotten, while the fashion of receiving wandering story-tellers is fast dying out. This is how he sung it:

"Cowld blaws the wind to-day, sweet'art,
Cowld be the draps ov raain;
The fust trew-luv that ever I 'ad,
In the greenwud 'ee wos slain.

"'Twas daown in the gaarden-green, sweet'art,
Where you and I did waalk;
The purtiest vlower that in the gaarden growed
Es rinkled (withered) to a staalk.

"The staalk will graw no laives, sweet'art,
The vlowers will ne'er return:
And now my oan love es dead and gone,
Wot can I do but mourn?"

"The pore maid did zing this," explained Uncle Anthony. "She was in a wisht way, for maidens be vit fer nothin' 'cipt they've got a man by 'em. The man es the tree, an' the maid es an ivy-laif, and tha's oal 'bout it. But you do knaw, my deears, that when a man 'ave bin dead one year, 'ee do allays cum back. Tha's religion, ed'n et then? Zo—

"A twelvemonth an' a day bein' gone,
The sperrit rised and spok:

"'My body es clay cowld, sweet'art,
My breath smells 'evvy an' strong;
And ef you kiss my cowld white lips,
Your time will not be long.'

"Ah, but thicky maid wos a true maid. She cudden rest till she 'ad kissed the booy she loved; and w'en she'd kissed 'im once, she loved him more and more. Zo she cried:

"Oa, wawn mooar kiss from yer dear cowld lips,
One kiss is oal I craave;
Oa, wawn mooar kiss from yer dear cowld lips,
An' return back to yer graave."

After this, Uncle Anthony sung in a low, wailing tone a stormy kind of duet between the maid and what he called her "booy's sperrit," who tried to make her accompany him to the world of shadows, and after much weeping, she departed with her lover.

"And zo et es, my deears," remarked Uncle Anthony, "that trew luv is stronger'n death."

"That's a wisht zong, sure enough, Uncle Anthony," remarked one of the women, who at such times were allowed especial liberty. "Strick up summin' purty and sweet and lively." Whereupon he sung a song about a sailor who courted a rich nobleman's daughter "worth five hundred thousan' in gould." This pleased them much, after which he started to tell a story. At first he did not interest me, for my mind was filled with many things; but presently I saw that his tale was original. He brought in our meeting in the Molesworth Arms at Wadebridge, and insinuated many surmises concerning me. He took a long time to tell the story, for he weaved in a love episode, a duel, the appearance of a ghost and a wizard, besides many droll sayings peculiar to the

county; but through it all I could see that he aimed at me, and gave hints that he suspected I had other motives in coming to Endellion than those which I had revealed. He described me as an unknown cavalier who wore a mask; he also spoke of a wise man whose eyes pierced the mask. It is true he dated the story in the far back past; all the same, I could not help seeing his meaning. I doubt whether any of the listeners other than myself saw his drift—but I felt sure that he had suspicions concerning me. Whether his feelings were friendly or no, I could not gather; neither could I understand his motive in so turning the story. The tale was well liked, however, for the old man weaved it well. He ended it by telling us that the maid wedded the man she loved, and that when she was on her way to church, she trod on flowers strewn by angel hands, while angel voices sung songs of hope and gladness to her.

"And what became of the masked cavalier?" asked Otho Killigrew when he had finished.

"I'll tell 'ee that next time I come this way," replied Uncle Anthony. "That's a paart of another stoary."

"And the wise man?" I asked,—"what became of him?"

"The wise man, Maaster Roger Penryn—for tha's the naame you towld me to call 'ee—es livin' still. A trewly wise man don'never die. 'Ee do live top 'igh plaaces, my deear. A wise man do mount a 'igh rock, and rest in paice. Around 'im es the wild, treacherous waaste, but up there

'ee's saafe. 'Appy be they who in trouble seek the shelter of the wise man's 'igh plaace. 'Tes the shadda of a great rock in a weary land."

I pondered much about the old man's tale, and made up my mind that, if I could, I would speak with him alone. I decided that he was not what he seemed; but how I could converse with him again was not easy to discover, for he expressed a desire to retire, and Otho Killigrew continued to watch me closely.

Before I was in any way able to decide what to do, I knew by the baying of the hounds outside and the sounds at the door that some visitor was approaching. At a look from Colman Killigrew, all the serving-people left the room. Uncle Anthony also went out with them, saying that he would retire to rest.

The newcomer turned out to be one John Polperro, a fair-spoken young fellow of about five-and-twenty. I saw at a glance that he was a gentleman, although of no great force of character. He was dressed in accordance with the latest foppery of the times, and was, I thought, mighty careful about his attire. His face was somewhat weak, but there was no vice, no meanness in it. I presently discovered, too, that on occasion he could speak boldly.

Colman Killigrew's welcome was by no means warm, while each of the sons looked at him distrustfully, almost savagely. But he did not seem to heed their evident dislike.

"I would like a word with you alone," he said to the squire.

"I am alone," was the reply. "I have no secrets from my sons."

"But there is a stranger among you," retorted Polperro.

"He is a friend who honours us by staying with us. He is of the same religion and hath the same interests."

I winced at this, and rose to leave, but Colman Killigrew, by a gesture, bid me remain.

"But this is not an affair for the ears of all," retorted Polperro.

"I have no affairs with you that may not be discussed by all here," was the cool response.

I wondered at this, for I could not fathom the old man's design. Perhaps he thought that by treating me as one of his family, even though I was a stranger, he would cause me to be more obedient to his wishes in the future. I listened eagerly, however, for I remembered why I was there.

"Be it so, then," replied Polperro with a touch of anger in his voice. "You know, then, that I have met Mistress Nancy Molesworth?"

The old man nodded.

"I love her."

Colman Killigrew betrayed no emotion whatever, but the sons made a movement expressive of scorn and derision.

Polperro saw this, and the colour began to mount to his cheeks. I could see, too, that he had difficulty in refraining from angry words; but he mastered himself.

"I have reason to believe that my sentiments are not unrequited."

Still Colman Killigrew was silent.

"You know that a messenger was sent to you. He bore a letter containing an offer of marriage. This you received and read."

The old man nodded.

"This you received and read," repeated John Polperro, "but I cannot think you fairly understood the purport of the letter, otherwise you would have sent back a different answer."

"The answer was plain."

"But curt and uncivil. It was not such an answer as one gentleman may send to another."

"I said that eagles mate not with hawks."

"That is why I cannot think you understood. My family is at least as old as your own."

"On the father's side, perchance—but on the mother's?—Bah! we will not speak of it."

Young John Polperro's hand played nervously with the hilt of his sword; but still he kept his temper under control.

"I am come with my father's consent and approval," he continued; "I am come in person to offer my name and fortune—a name as good as your own, a fortune more than equal to that of the Killigrews."

"I give you the same answer that I gave to your messenger," was the response.

John Polperro still kept outwardly cool.

"Then I have another proposition to make," he continued, but this time his voice took a loftier tone. "I am here to offer Mistress Nancy Moles-

worth the protection of my father's house. I am here to offer her safety and honour!"

The old man started to his feet. He had been pricked on the quick at last. "What mean you, sir?" he cried.

"It is well known that ever since she came from the convent, she has been afraid to live here!" cried Polperro. "That your sons pay her attention which she hates; that she loathes the thought of living where modesty, virtue, and honour are all outraged!"

I think he was sorry he had uttered these words as soon as they had passed his lips.

All the Killigrews looked as though they would have liked to have struck him dead. On my part, however, I had a feeling of admiration. Courage is always good, even although it be shown at the wrong time. Nothing was said or done, however. They remembered that the man stood in their own house.

"The maid has had but one occasion to speak of her woes to any one," continued Polperro. "You allowed her to visit Mistress Arundell, where she met with a friend she had known at the convent school. There, as you know, it was my good fortune to meet her."

I felt he was a fool. Why could he not have spoken more guardedly? If he wanted to do Mistress Nancy an injury, he could not have accomplished his purpose better. I saw, too, that old Colman Killigrew ground his teeth with rage, and I heard him mutter something about his being mad to let the girl go a-gadding about at

people's houses. For a moment I thought he would have answered Polperro angrily; but such was not his plan.

"You stand in my own hall, or it might go hard with you," he said presently. "But enough. You spoke in hot blood, just as a lovesick fool may. Let me also say this, although you deserve not this explanation: Mistress Nancy Molesworth is betrothed to my eldest son Otho according to her father's wish. Therefore her honour is safe, and she will be wedded to one of her own degree."

"Is this by her own will?" cried Polperro.

"A maid's will is like the wind in April," replied the old man, "and is no more to be relied on. But I tell you this, she shall be guarded safely."

"Kept in prison!" retorted Polperro; "and these," looking with scorn on the young men, "will be her gaolers."

He turned to leave the room, but did not flinch at the angry looks bestowed upon him. Benet Killigrew turned to follow him, but he was stopped by his father's word

"He stands in my own hall, Benet, and must be treated as a guest," he said. "The time may come when the laws of courtesy may not hinder you from giving him the chastisement he deserves."

"That time cannot come too soon for me!" cried John Polperro. "Meanwhile, do not think Mistress Nancy Molesworth is without friends. And besides that, it might be profitable for you to re-

member——" he did not finish the sentence. Perchance he felt that silence were wise.

"I did not think you would witness such a scene, Roger Penryn," said the old man when he had gone, "for in truth I did not believe the lad had so much spirit."

"He spoke stoutly," I responded, not daring to ask the questions which hung on my lips. "He sadly lacked wisdom, however, and will land himself in trouble if he be not careful."

"I had many things to say to you to-night," remarked old Colman Killigrew, "but they must stand over. I am not as young as I was, and young Polperro's words have ill prepared me to speak on matters which lie near my heart, and I trust to yours also. But the opportunity will come to-morrow."

I bent my head gravely. I was glad he had put off his questionings, for, truth to tell, I dreaded the man. I instinctively felt his eyes probing me. I knew he had been making plans all through the evening to find out who I was, and why I had come northward.

"I will retire to rest," he said; "perchance you, too, will be glad to get to your room?"

"I will go with him," said Otho Killigrew; "it is easy for a stranger to lose his way in this house."

So I said good-night to his brothers, who pressed me to stay among them and drink another bottle of wine, and walked up a broad stairway with Otho by my side.

On reaching the top of the stairway I saw a man

walking to and fro; but he seemed to pay no heed to us as we passed by him.

"You will stay a day or two with us, I trust?" remarked Otho.

I answered in the affirmative.

"And then?—go you farther north?"

"That will depend on what your father thinks," I responded.

He gave me a searching glance, but spoke no word more until we reached my bedroom door.

"I am afraid you have had a rough welcome," he said; "but we have the name for a rough people. All the same, we are faithful to our friends."

"Yes," I assented.

"The Killigrews never yet turned their backs upon those who merited their friendship," concluded Otho; "but they never forgive those who betray their trust. Never!"

He uttered the words slowly and distinctly, as was his manner of speech.

"Sleep soundly, Roger Penryn," he said as he bade me good-night. "The Tower of London is not more safely guarded than Endellion."

"It is good of you to tell me," I replied; "but a good sword and a ready hand are all I have needed in the past."

To this he did not reply, and I heard his steps echo along the corridor. He walked slowly, like a man deep in thought. Did he suspect anything, or did my mission make me suspicious?

The room into which I was ushered was plain and bare. The walls were whitewashed, the floor almost wholly uncovered. I sat for a long while

on the bed in deep thought, and my musings were not pleasant. I almost regretted having undertaken to do Peter Trevisa's bidding. Not because of the danger. Nay, that was almost the only redeeming feature in the business. And yet I tried to persuade myself that my mission was good. Were not these Killigrews lawless men? Should I not be rendering signal service to the maid Nancy Molesworth by taking her away from a place which, according to Polperro, she loathed? And still I was not satisfied.

Presently I thought I heard a rustling outside. Instantly I went to the door and opened it softly. The corridor was but dimly lighted, but I saw the retreating form of a woman. She did not look a well-bred dame; at the same time she was different from the serving-women I had seen in the hall. I started to follow her; but before I had taken two steps, she turned, and I saw her face. Dim as was the light, her features seemed familiar. Evidently she was a superior kind of serving-maid. In a moment, however, she vanished.

"Ah," I thought, "there is some stairway yonder!" I looked cautiously around before starting to seek it, then stopped. I heard the clank of steel. I saw the man I had passed with Otho Killigrew, still pacing the corridor.

"A sentinel, eh?" I mused; "truly, the place is guarded."

Noiselessly I slid back to my room. The man had not seen me. My stockinged foot touched a piece of paper, which was carefully folded.

Close to my bed the candles flickered in the

socket; so, after carefully bolting my door, I made my way towards them. On unfolding the paper I saw one word only. The word was

ROCHE.

CHAPTER VI.

THE USES OF A SERVING-MAID.

A FEW minutes later I was in total darkness. But I did not sleep. My mind was much occupied by what I had seen and heard. I tried to understand the purport thereof, as seemed necessary at such a time. Several facts were plain. Foremost in point of interest was that the maid Mistress Nancy Molesworth was in the house. I fell to thinking about her, and wondered much as to what she was like. From what I gathered, too, she was not indisposed to receive the attention of John Polperro, who had that night asked for her hand in marriage. But that did not trouble me. What should I care whom she married? It was for me to take her to Treviscoe, and thus be freed from my difficulties. The maid's love was nothing to me. That was doubtless as changeable as the wind. I remembered, too, that she was betrothed to Otho Killigrew. Then there were three who wanted her. I laughed as I thought of it. I imagined, however, that Restormel lands had far more to do with the desire to get her than had her beauty or her goodness. The Killigrews, however, for the present possessed her; but they

did not reckon upon me. She was well guarded, and perchance the sentinel in the corridor was especially appointed as her watchman. The wench I had seen was perhaps Mistress Nancy Molesworth's serving-woman. But what did that piece of paper mean? What was the purport of the word written thereon? *Roche*—I would bear it in mind. When morning came I would again examine the thing. Perhaps it would reveal more to me in the light of day.

By and by I fell asleep without having formed any plan of action. But when morning came, my mind was clear and my hand steady.

The window of my room faced the open country. Beneath me was a courtyard, perhaps twenty feet down. There were also rooms above—how high, I could not tell. As I opened the window the clear spring air entered the room, likewise the sound of the sea. I discovered afterwards that, like several others on this northern coast, the house was built close to the cliff; but I could see nothing of it at the time. The sound of the waves was pleasant to me, however, as was the smell of the morning air, and I felt like singing for the very joy of youth, and health, and strength. On remembering my mission, however, I became more thoughtful; and, hastily dressing myself, I found my way towards the dining-hall.

On walking along the corridor, no guard appeared. Evidently his work was regarded as done; but all around me was the hum of voices. There were doubtless eyes and ears around me of which I knew nothing.

Otho Killigrew was coming in from the outside as I came into the entrance hall. He greeted me cordially, although I thought his face looked anxious.

"You rise early, Roger Penryn," he said; "my brothers have not yet appeared."

"The morning air was so sweet that I wanted to drink it to the full," I answered, moving towards the door.

"I will go out with you," said Otho. "Endellion is a quaint old place. Men build not houses so now."

We stood outside, and I looked on the grim gray building. Young Peter Trevisa had described it rightly. An old castle still stood. It was mostly a ruin, but well preserved. The house in which I had slept had been modeled somewhat on the lines of the place which had been reared in the far back past.

"It was built in the old feudal days," remarked Otho, nodding towards the ruin. "The Killigrews are an ancient race."

"But the Killigrews have not always lived here?"

"The Rosecarricks have, and the Killigrews were mixed with them many generations ago. Perhaps that is why the newer part of the house was modeled on the old. I am glad the ruins stand so well. I have discovered many a secret place. I love things old, too."

"Old systems, you mean?"

"Yes, I was not thinking of them then,—but do. I love the feudal system. It is the only way a people can be knitted to a crown."

"But the Killigrews are not all in love with the crown," I suggested meaningly.

"No; we are the only branch of the family who do not pay homage to the new order of things. You are a Catholic, so I can speak freely. We long for a Catholic king to reign. We keep up the feudal system somewhat, too. Our tenants are bound to us; so much so, that we could raise many men to help in a cause we espoused."

I changed the subject, for I saw whither he was drifting.

The back of the house almost overhangs the cliffs," I said.

"Yes; there be several of a similar nature—Rosecarrick, Trevose, Polwhele, and others. It was thought necessary in the old times."

He accompanied me around the building, talking in his careful measured way all the time, while I examined, as well as I was able, the particular features of the place. We had barely compassed the house when a great clanging bell rang.

On entering the dining-hall we found breakfast prepared; but old Colman Killigrew did not appear. Benet Killigrew met me, and examined me as though he were calculating my strength. I could have sworn that he would have liked to have challenged me to wrestle.

Presently Otho, who had left me, came back, telling me that his father was too unwell to meet me at breakfast, but hoped to be well enough to leave his bed-chamber when evening came; in the mean while, he could trust his sons to assure me of his welcome.

Why, I knew not, but I felt somewhat disturbed at this; but simply expressing my sorrow at his ill health, we sat down to breakfast. What happened during the day was of little moment, only when night came I reflected that never for a minute had I been left alone. Either one or other of the Killigrews had been with me. It might only be a happening, or it might be they had received orders not to allow me out of their sight. Moreover, only one thing of interest had been mentioned, and that appeared of no consequence. It was simply that old Anthony, the droll, had left early. I should have thought nothing of this, only I had made sure that he wanted to speak to me, and had moreover determined to ask him the meaning of the story he had told.

Just before the evening meal I had a few minutes to myself, and was able to reflect calmly on my position. If, as I suspected, the Killigrews had determined to watch me, I must take bold steps at once in order to accomplish my work. In this surmise I was right, as will appear presently. But how to commence, was my difficulty. It was plain that Mistress Nancy was closely watched; and as I had no thought as to what part of the house she was kept, and as she knew naught of me, there appeared no way by which I could speak to her. Besides, even if such chance did occur, how could I approach her? To say the least, I was an impostor, acting a lie in order to maintain my right to Trevanion. That was the thought which galled me. For the rest, I cared nothing; but I did wince at

the thought of a Trevanion being afraid to tell his name.

I had almost decided to leave the house at once, and then think of another way to accomplish my work, when I heard the rustle of a woman's dress outside the door. In a second I was in the corridor, and saw the same serving-maid I had seen the previous night. I slipped back into my chamber again immediately, for coming towards her I saw Otho Killigrew.

"Your mistress, Amelia?" said Otho; "she is better disposed to-day, I hope."

"She's fine and wisht," replied the girl. "She do set and mope oall day long. She've bin worse to-day."

"Ah! Do you know why?"

"She seed Maaster John Polperro go way laast night."

Otho uttered a curse.

"She's so loanly, she've nothing to do. She've no books to raid, nor nothin'."

"Tell her I'll go to Rosecarrick this night and bring some for her. I'll take them to her."

"She waan't see 'ee, Maaster Otho," replied the girl earnestly; "but p'r'aps it would soffen 'er ef you wos to git 'er somethin' to raid. And, Maaster Otho."

"Yes, what is it?"

"I wish you would laive me go ovver to Church Town to-night. I waant to see Jennifer, my sister."

"And what will your mistress do meanwhile?"

"She doan't spaik to me when I'm weth 'er, sur. Besides, I waan't be long."

"Very well," replied Otho, after hesitating a little. "When do you wish to go?"

"I might so well go after supper, sur."

"See that your mistress wants nothing before you go."

"Oall right, sur."

Instantly I made up my mind that I would speak to Amelia that night. I felt sure that the maid was sister to Jennifer Lanteglos, whom I had seen the previous night. She was going to Endellion village after supper, while Otho Killigrew was going to Rosecarrick to get some books for Mistress Nancy Molesworth. I must frame some sort of reason for absenting myself early from the supper-table.

I do not think I should have accomplished this had not fortune favoured me. Old Colman Killigrew sent word to say that he was not well enough to sup with us, but would I come and speak with him after the meal was over? My mind was made up.

Otho was silent during supper, but the other brothers talked loudly. I joined in their conversation, and made myself jovial. Presently Otho left without a word of explanation to any one; and no sooner had he gone than I told the brothers of their father's wish that I should visit him. They laughed at me, saying I was but a child at drinking; but I had my way. As chance would have it, no sooner had I reached the great door than I saw Amelia walking along a passage

towards a small doorway I had seen through the day. A few seconds later, I stood outside the house, while the girl walked a few yards ahead of me. She did not go along the main road, but down a narrow pathway. When I thought we were a sufficient distance from the house, I spoke to her. It was a risk to try and talk with her, doubtless, but nothing could be done without risk.

"Amelia—Amelia Lanteglos!" I said.

She turned sharply.

"No, Maaster Benet," she said, "you mustn't go wi' me. I shell screech murder ef you do." I knew by her voice that she both feared and hated Benet Killigrew.

"I am not Benet," I said. "I am a friend."

"You—you are the straanger?" she stammered.

"Yes," I said; "yet not such a stranger as you think."

In a few minutes I had won the girl's confidence. There are several ways of making a serving-maid pliable. One is to appeal for her help, another to make love to her, another to bribe her, another to flatter her. I did the last. I told her I had heard what a faithful servant she was, how much she was trusted in the house, and what a fine-looking maid she was. This had to be done by degrees.

"You have a very responsible position, Amelia," I said at length; "and it is well for your mistress that you love her. She needs your love, too. What she would do without you, I do not know."

"No, nor I," said the girl.

"Your mistress needs friends, Amelia."

The maid began to cry bitterly.

"I wouldn't stay in the plaace but for Mistress Nancy," she sobbed at length. "I caan't tell 'ee oall, sur. There be two of 'em that do want 'er, but she do 'aate 'em oall."

"And she loves young John Polperro," I said. "He's the one that ought to marry her."

"How do you know, sur?"

"Never mind, I do know," I replied; "but say no word to any of them, or it will be worse for your mistress."

"I wouldn't say anything for worlds, sur."

"Amelia," I continued, after much talk, "I am come here to help your mistress."

"To help her, sur,—'ow?"

"I cannot tell you now. In fact, I can tell only her. Could you not arrange that I could see her?"

"See Mistress Nancy Molesworth, sur?"

"Yes."

"No, sur. She is always watched. She caan't laive her rooms without owld maaster knowin'."

"In what part of the house does she reside?"

The maid told me. It was in the same wing as that in which my own bed-chamber was situated, but the floor above. The door which opened to it was also watched.

"Are the watchers faithful?" I asked.

"Sam Daddo and Tom Juliff, sur. They'll do nothin' but what the owld maaster do tell 'em."

"But why is she watched so closely?"

"She've tried to git away once, sur. Tha's why."

"Then she loves not the Killigrews?"

"She haates 'em, sur. But I caan't tell 'ee oall."

I tried to devise a means whereby I could see her, but none were feasible. Force could not be used until flight was arranged, and that was not done. Indeed, I had not seen the maid yet.

"But," I said, "doth your mistress have no outdoor exercise."

"She cannot go out except one of they Killigrews go weth 'er, and so she doan't go at all. The last time she was out, Master Otho went wi' 'er. She waan't go no more now."

"But she will die cooped up in rooms where she hath no fresh air."

"She sometimes walks on the leads at the top of the 'ouse; but that's oall."

"How does she get there?"

"There's a stairs from the room."

"Ah! But there must be other ways of getting to the roof."

"I doan't knaw, I've only bin there a vew months. I wudden stay now but for Mistress Nancy."

"But I can trust you, Amelia?"—and then I satisfied myself that she would be secret. "Tell her," I continued presently, "that if she values her liberty or her honour, if she cares for John Polperro, to be on the leads to-night at midnight. If I do not get there it will be because I cannot."

With that I left the girl, and hurried back to the house. I entered the side door without notice, and then made up the broad stairway towards the

room in which I had been told old Colman Killigrew slept.

"Will you tell your master that Master Roger Penryn waits to see him?" I said to the man who paced the corridor. I gave my false name without wincing this time, for my blood was tingling with excitement. The thought of seeing Mistress Nancy Molesworth, together with wondering what the outcome would be, made me eager for action.

A few moments later I entered the old man's room, prepared to answer any question he might put. He eyed me keenly as I entered, but spoke scarce a word for several minutes. Little by little, however, he got to talking about King George, and the feeling in the country concerning him.

"You say Hugh Boscawen is busy raising an army?" he queried presently. "Do volunteers come quickly?"

"But tardily," I replied. "Cornish folks love not the thought of a German wearing the crown and spending our money. Moreover, the Catholic feeling is strong."

"Say you so?" he queried, fixing his eyes on me. "What indications be there?"

"It is fully believed that Master John Wesley is a good Catholic and that he is labouring in the interest of the Catholic Church, having authority from the Pope; and everywhere he is gaining followers, everywhere people be forsaking the parish churches."

He nodded his head gravely.

"It is rumoured that young Charles is planning to get to England even now," I continued. "If

he but leads an army, the people will, if they have encouragement and a leader, flock to his standard."

"What steps have you taken in the neighbourhood of Falmouth?" he asked.

"I have simply spoken with the people. I am but poor. I am the only representative of a small branch of my family. What the cause needs is an old and well-known name. We want a man who can place himself at the head of five hundred good swords—one who can gain the confidence of the country."

"Can you name the man?" he asked, keeping his eyes on me.

"Colman Killigrew," I replied boldly.

"Is my name known so far away from here?"

"Else why should I come here?" was my response.

After this he asked me many questions about the Penryns, which I answered readily, for I knew them intimately.

"You heard of me; and hearing that young Charles was coming to claim his own, you thought——"

"That the hope of the country lay in you."

"What force could you raise in your part of the country, if the need for men should arise?"

I answered him vaguely.

"It is well you came, Roger Penryn," he said, after he had asked me many questions. "The rumour you have heard concerning young Charles is true. He will land in Scotland; and there is no doubt that the Highlanders will flock to his

standard. He will then march southwards, and there is but little doubt but he will have a great following. There will be much opposition too, for many people comprehend not the glories of the Catholic faith. He will need every good sword he can command; hence the need for the faithful to be ready."

I nodded my head, but spoke not, for I was already tired of playing my part.

"We will work quietly," continued old Colman Killigrew. "While Hugh Boscawen is publicly gathering his men, you and others will have to work in the dark. But no time must be lost. Now that we understand each other, you must begin at once to gather the defenders of the faith and be ready for action. Not that we would be discourteous," he added quickly; "you must stay with me at least another day."

"It is well," I replied; "you are well situated here. This should be a stronghold in time of trouble."

After this I asked him many questions about the castle, and what secret rooms there were. I asked him, too, the means by which the roof could be reached in order to make use of the battlements; but concerning this he would tell me nothing. Indeed, as I afterwards reflected, he had told me little but what was common rumour.

I did not join the younger Killigrews that night. I wanted to be alone to think, and to devise means whereby I could reach the roof at midnight, and so talk with Mistress Nancy Molesworth. I

therefore got back to my bed-chamber with all speed, and spent some time in musing quietly.

I examined the situation of the chamber with much care. Underneath me, as I have said, was a courtyard, but to the left were the ruined walls of the old castle. If I could reach them I might find means of climbing to the top of the newer portion of the house; but it seemed impossible. I knew that a sentinel guarded the passage, otherwise I would have made my way up the stairway I had seen. I silently opened the door and examined the corridor in the hope that I should see some other means of carrying out my wishes; but the man was wide awake and watchful. All was now quiet. Evidently the family had gone to bed. I thought once of creeping along by the wall, and disabling the man called Sam Daddo who stood there. But that must necessarily mean noise; besides, the time was not ripe for such an action. I could not take away the maid Nancy Molesworth that night, and the man's disablement must lead to many questions on the morrow.

So I crept back into my chamber again. My candle had gone out, but the moon shone almost as bright as day. The window of my room was not large, but I could at a pinch have squeezed my body through. It was divided into two parts, the division being made by a granite upright.

"This is a big chamber," I mused; "surely there should be another window." Then I remembered that I had examined every crevice of the place with the exception of the walls behind

the big bed on which I had slept. The window faced the east, but the head of the bed was against the northern wall. I tried to peer behind it, but could see nothing. Then making as little noise as possible, I lifted the thing away. Having done this, I saw an aperture which looked as though it might have been intended for a second window.

"This is well," I thought, pleased at my discovery. "Mistress Nancy Molesworth, I think I shall see you to-night."

For by this time the spirit of adventure fairly possessed me, and, forgetting everything save my purpose to see the maid, I pulled away the boards which had covered the opening. This done, the light shone in, and I soon found that, although the hinges were sadly rusted, they yielded to pressure. A few seconds later my hair was fanned by the breezes outside, and my eyes were eagerly measuring the distance between me and the walls of the old castle upon which I looked.

"It can be easily done," I thought, and without hesitation I put my feet through the opening; and then, placing my arm around the granite upright, I managed to get the whole of my body outside.

A moment later I stood on the ivy-grown walls of the old castle.

My heart gave a leap, for I heard the sound of a deep-toned bell. Was my action discovered? I soon reassured myself. It was only the clock striking twelve. I looked around me for means of ascent, and then I felt I had undertaken a fool's task. Would the maid come on to the roof at the bidding of a stranger? Would she listen

to me, even if she did come? But it was not for me to think of that. I had promised to be there, and I would go—if I could.

I carefully crept along the ivy-grown walls, eagerly looking for a means of ascent, for I knew that if I were to see the maid I must act quickly. Even now it was past the hour I had promised to meet her. The night was very bright, but I could see nothing to aid me, and I began to upbraid myself as a childish fool for promising what I could not fulfil, when I spied an iron pipe fastened to the wall. The battlements were perhaps twelve feet above me, and this pipe was by no means easy to reach. I would get hold of the thing, and by means thereof would climb to the roof.

No sooner had the plan entered my mind than I prepared to execute it.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE ROOF OF ENDELLION CASTLE.

As I have said, the task I had set myself was not an easy one. First of all, I should have to leap several feet to a ledge, which was by no means wide, and then I should have to grasp the pipe, as well as some ivy which had climbed up by its side. If I failed to reach the ledge I should fall, I knew not how far; or if the pipe yielded to my weight, the same thing would happen. But I did not hesitate. My blood was hot, and the

spirit of adventure overmastered me. Besides—and I must confess it if I will tell my story truly—in spite of my hatred of women, I felt a great desire to see the maid I had promised to take to Treviscoe. I recked not of consequences—nay, I had a sort of pleasure in dangerous deeds.

So I made the leap without hesitation, although a curious feeling possessed me as I thought of the yawning darkness underneath me. I reached the ledge in safety, and the thing I grasped held firm. Then, without waiting a second, I started to climb. It was weary work, for the ivy yielded, and the crevices wherein I could stick my feet were few. But I had often attempted this kind of thing as a boy, and before long I placed my arm round one of the huge merlons which the ancient Killigrews had caused to be placed there; and in a few seconds I lifted myself up so that my head was raised some distance above the stonework. I had scarcely done this when I heard a slight scream, which came so suddenly that I was in danger of relaxing my hold. Instinctively divining what this meant, however, I made a low sound suggesting silence, and before long stood on the roof.

It had been a hard climb, and I panted freely, looking round meanwhile for the one who had screamed. At first I could see nothing but chimneys; but presently I saw two dark forms hiding by a portion of the roof which stood somewhat higher than the rest. I walked slowly towards them.

Even now I am conscious of a strange feeling

at heart as I remember that night. For there in the bright moonlight appeared a spectacle which was almost awesome. The sight of the sea and the rock-bound coast burst suddenly upon me. Below, hundreds of feet down, the waves cast themselves on the beach, which was studded with huge masses of rock. The sea shone in the light of the moon, and behind the crest of every wave was a great streak of silver lustre, fair to behold. Far out, I could see the waves a-dancing, while here and there the lights of distant vessels shone. Away to the right, Tintagell, perchance the mightiest coast-rock in England, lifted its hoary head, while to the left the bare, rugged cliffs, in spite of the soft moonbeams, looked chill and drear.

And I was there—behind the battlements of the home of the Killigrews—alone save for the presence of two helpless women. All this came to me quickly—I seemed to realize it in a moment; and then I shook the feeling from me, for I remembered I had work to do.

"'Tis he," I heard a voice say, which I recognized as that of Amelia Lanteglos. And then I saw the other maid, whose face was partly hidden, turn towards me.

"Be not afraid," I said as gently as I could; for though I would have little to do with them, I loved not to frighten women.

"What would you, sir?" said a voice, low and sweet "Amelia, my serving-maid, hath persuaded me to come here to-night. It is against my better judgment I have come, but——" then

she stopped as though she knew not how to finish what she had begun to say.

I cannot deny it, I felt something like pity for the maid. Her voice was sad and plaintive. It suggested weariness, loneliness—and no man is unmoved by such things. I felt ashamed, too. I had promised to take her to Treviscoe, to be the wife of Peter Trevisa; for I had little doubt but that if those two men once got her there, they would try to frame arguments strong enough to make her yield to their wishes. But this was only for a moment. I reflected that women were as little to be trusted as April weather, and would veer around like a weathercock. I remembered my own love affair, and called to mind the words the girl Boscawen had said to me only a few days before she threw me over for Prideaux.

"I would speak to you alone for a few minutes," I said, wiping the sweat from my forehead.

"Your hand is bleeding," she said kindly; "and —and how did you get here?"

"I climbed from the old castle wall."

"But it is impossible—it could not be! No one could do it!" This she said in low, broken whispers, but like one frightened.

"But I am here," I replied grimly; "and there was no other way of getting here from my chamber. One has to risk something if you are to be saved from the Killigrews."

"What do you know of the Killigrews?" she asked eagerly.

She followed me a few steps out of ear-shot of the serving-maid, still keeping her face hidden.

"I know that you are to be the wife of Otho Killigrew, unless desperate measures are taken," I replied. "I know, too, that Benet Killigrew professes to love you."

"How do you know?"

"You are Mistress Nancy Molesworth, are you not?"

"Yes, and you are Master Roger Penryn, so my maid tells me. But I do not know you."

She let the shawl with which she had wrapped her head fall, and for the first time I saw her face. She was but little more than twenty years of age, and in the moonlight looked younger. As far as I could judge, her hair was of chestnut hue, and it flashed brightly even in the night light. Her face appeared very pale, and her eyes shone as though she were much excited; but she was a very beautiful maid. She was not of the timid, shrinking kind which some men love, but stood up before me bravely, for the which even then I was glad. Nor was she little, and weak; rather she was taller than most women, and shaped with much beauty.

"It matters but little whether you know me or not, if you will trust me," I said. "Believe me, I have come to take you away from this den of cutthroats to a place of safety."

"Where?"

"Where would you go?" I asked.

My head was bare, and my face was plainly to be seen, so bright was the night. I felt her eyes fastened upon me, and it seemed to me as though she were reading my innermost thoughts. But I

was not to be baulked by a girl, so I tried to appear unconcerned as she gazed.

"You met John Polperro at the Arundells," I continued. "He has offered his hand to you in marriage, but your guardian refused. Last night he came here and repeated that offer, but it was declined. He is a fine fellow, Polperro, and spoke boldly."

"I know," said she—speaking, as I thought, more to herself than to me.

"After your guardian had refused his request that you might become his wife," I went on, "he offered you a home in his father's house. He spoke hotly, indiscreetly, but still as an honest man; that offer was also refused. Perchance you have been informed of this?"

She did not speak, nor did she make any sign whatever.

"It is impossible for Polperro to help you now. If he again appears in the neighbourhood, he will receive steel for a welcome. But I admire him. I am always proud to call such as he my friend; so if I can take you to his father's house, I shall be doing a good deed, and rendering a service to one he loves."

This I said in a stammering kind of way, for somehow the girl's eyes made me feel uncomfortable. I wished she would not look at me so steadfastly.

"Know you Master John Polperro?" she asked presently.

"Else why should I be here?" I responded, wishing I had adopted some other plan of action.

I hated this underhanded method of work, and the maid's eyes looked truthful. I should have felt far more at ease could I have taken her away by force than have subjected myself to this kind of work. Still, circumstances had made force of such kind impossible. Had the maid been allowed her liberty, I might have accomplished my purpose differently; but being a safely guarded prisoner, I had to gain her confidence.

"And you came here by his wish? You are trying to do what he found impossible?"

I bit my lip with vexation. Why should she ask such questions. Was I not planning to take her away from a place where she was unhappy?

"It was no easy thing to get from my bedchamber here," I replied evasively. "A single slip, and I should either have been killed or crippled for life. Neither is it an easy thing to deal with these Killigrews. But for my promise to the man, I tell you I would not have attempted it."

"Your promise to whom?" she asked, and I cursed myself for being a fool. Why could I not have boldly told the necessary lies? I had intended to. Chance had given me the finest possible opportunity. I found no difficulty in trying to deceive old Colman Killigrew. Why, then, should this chit of a maid make me stammer? What could be more easy than to tell her that I, being a stranger to the Killigrews, and a friend of John Polperro, had come here to take her to a place of honour and safety?

"To whom should my promise be given?" I said. "I spoke to your maid that she might tell

you of my desire to meet you. I have risked my life to get here, and I have a difficult game to play with the Killigrews."

I was angry beyond measure with myself for telling of any danger I had encountered. Had I been acting a straightforward part, I should not have mentioned it; but now I had a feeling that such words were necessary.

"If you will consent to trust me," I went on clumsily, for I felt her eyes upon me as I spoke, "I will arrange plans whereby I can take you away. I could be ready by to-morrow night. It could be done without detection. A rope could be fastened around yon battlements—it is only a dozen feet or so to the old castle walls. From thence it is not difficult of descent. I could get horses in readiness, and in a few hours we could be out of danger."

"And if you were discovered?" she asked abruptly.

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to fight the Killigrews," I replied grimly.

I knew there was a gulf between us. She did not trust me. She doubted every word I was saying. I wished the light were not so good, so that she might not see my face so plainly. And yet I had her at advantage. She loved not the Killigrews—she hated the thought of wedding Otho. Probably I appeared as her only hope of escaping from them. I could see the girl Amelia Lanteglos watching us closely. Doubtless she was wondering as to the upshot of our conversation.

"Do you think I gain any advantage by coming here?" I went on like a fool. "I never saw you until this hour. I have no spite against the Killigrews, they never harmed me. It would not harm me if you were to marry Otho. Possibly he would make you as good a husband as—as another. But I—I gave a promise that I would set you free, if I could. However, if you prefer to fly to the open arms of Otho,—well——" I shrugged my shoulders, and tried to hum a tune as I looked across the shining sea.

I know I said this brutally; but the maid angered me—angered me by the truthfulness of her looks, and the way she made me bungle the thoughts I had in my mind.

She continued to look at me steadfastly. Perhaps she remembered that if she accepted my offer, and if I succeeded in effecting her escape, she would have to travel alone with a man of whom she knew nothing. Presently she seemed to have made up her mind.

"You seem to be a gentleman," she said; "you speak as if you——" she hesitated as though she could not put her thoughts into words.

I remained silent.

She made a sudden movement forward, and placed her hand on my arm. "I am alone, helpless," she said. "I am surrounded by those I cannot trust. I hate—loathe the thought of——" again she stopped suddenly; then, looking straight into my face, she said: "Are you what you seem to be?"

It came upon me like a clap of thunder, and,

like a schoolboy discovered in theft, I hung my head.

"Is your name Roger Penryn?" she asked.

"No!"

"Do you know John Polperro?"

"No!"

The words came from me like shots from a musket. I could not tell a lie with the girl's cruel, truthful eyes upon me. They choked the falsehood in my throat, and I felt myself to be the sport of this maid who knew nothing of the world. I was glad I had told the truth, and yet I reproached myself for being beaten at the first definite move in the game I was playing. Probably the whole thing had been rendered impossible by my madness. Trevanion was gone from me forever; but, worse than that, I should have to confess to Peter Trevisa that I had failed to do the thing I had promised—that I had bungled most miserably.

I turned to go away. I would speak no more with her. She had been too much for me—she, a simple maid scarcely out of her teens. I had scarcely taken a step, however, before she stopped me.

"Then you are another tool of the Killigrews," she said. "There are not enough of them, and they must needs hire you. Not being able to work their will with me, even although I am a prisoner, they must needs use some other base means to accomplish their purpose." This she said passionately, yet with fine scorn.

"There you are wrong, Mistress Nancy Molesworth," I said warmly, for she had wounded me

sorely. "I am not the tool of these people. Nay, my life is in danger while I stay here. But enough of that. You refuse to accept my help?"

"How can I accept the help of a man who comes with a lie on his lips?" she cried;—"who comes professing a false name, and who pretends to be the friend of a man to whom he never spoke. How can I trust a man whose every action and every word is a lie?"

"Had I been a liar," I said, "I could have deceived you easily; but enough. There is no need that I should weary you with my presence. Some time perhaps——"

"If your name is not Roger Penryn, what is it?" she said; "and why have you tried to raise my hopes only to deceive me?"

I opened my mouth to tell her my name, but I could not utter the word. I could not tell her I was a Trevanion, nor relate to her my purpose in coming hither.

"It is not well I should speak to you further," I said. "But I have wrought you no harm. Neither would I if you had trusted in me. Nay, as God is my witness,"—and this I cried out passionately, for somehow the maid dragged the words from me,—"I would have let no harm have happened to you!"

With this I walked to the spot where I had ascended, and prepared to descend.

"Stop!" she whispered. "It will be far more difficult to go down than it was to come up."

"What of that?" I replied grimly.

"Because,"—and a blush mantled her cheek,—

"there is another road down. Look, yonder is the stairway."

"There is a sentinel."

"He is a lover of my maid," she replied. "She would lead him away a few steps out of sight while you got to your own chamber."

"But I should have to pass through your apartments."

"Amelia shall show you the way. I will remain here."

"No," I replied, for I was angry with her. "I will not be beholden to you in any way."

For the first time she looked at me kindly, but I took no heed. I placed my arm around the merlon, and then, grasping the gutter, lowered myself. I had often accomplished such feats, and this fact helped me now. In a few minutes I had reached the ledge, and a little later stood on the old castle walls again. Arrived there, I stopped and listened; but no sound reached me. I looked up, and saw that the maid Nancy Molesworth had followed my descent—saw that she was watching me now. There was an expression of wonder, of bewilderment, on her face. Doubtless she was seeking to divine who I was, and why I should come to her. I was sure she wanted a friend, too. But I knew not what to say—I had forfeited my right to help her. I suppose I was foolish at the moment, however. Most men are at times.

"Good-night, Mistress Nancy Molesworth," I said. "Remember that I am your friend. Perhaps some day I may be able to show it." Then I

squeezed myself into my bed-chamber, feeling ill pleased with myself.

I pulled off my clothes, and got to bed; but I could not sleep. Two conflicting forces were at war within me. One moment I reproached myself as a fool for not being able to deceive a slip of a maid without stammering. The next I found myself pitying her, and calling myself a traitor to my name for not seeking to rescue her from the Killigrews. Sometimes I cursed myself for being as easily moved as a boy of twenty-one, not able to withstand the simple questions of a convent-school girl; and again I reproached myself for yielding to Peter Trevisa's wishes, and undertaking a work unfit for a man of honour.

Presently a more serious matter presented itself to me. Should I abandon Peter Trevisa's commission? The maid had practically rejected my offer. Should I go back to Treviscoe and tell him that I had failed? Should I forever carry around with me the memory of the fact that I had made a promise to do a thing, and then at the first difficulty I had given it up like a puling girl? I had taken his money, I had given my word that I would do his work;—could I give it up? Even although Trevanion did not lie at the end of the business, it were unfair and cowardly to fail in my undertaking thus. Well, supposing I decided to make a second attempt; suppose I decided to devise new means to take the maid away—there were many obstacles in my road. Old Colman Killigrew expected me to depart the next day. I had promised to take his messages to some

Catholic families in the south of the country, and I should have no excuse for staying at Endellion. Once outside the house, my power to do anything would be gone.

"Let it be so," I said to myself angrily. "I will leave the whole business in the lurch. Let old Peter do his work as best he may, and let the maid Nancy Molesworth fight her own battles with these Killigrews. To-morrow I will start for London, and there I will seek for work more congenial to me. If this Charles comes to England, King George will need good swords." But even as these thoughts passed through my mind, I was not satisfied with them. I felt I should be playing a coward's part, and was seeking some other way whereby to better satisfy myself, when I heard a low knocking at the door. I did not speak, and the rapping became louder.

"Who is there?" I asked, like one awaked out of sleep.

"Otho Killigrew," said a voice.

CHAPTER VIII.

OTHO DISCOVERS MY NAME.

"He hath discovered where I have been," was my first thought. "He hath been told that I have conversed with the maid Nancy Molesworth." And I began to think how I should answer him.

I got out of bed, however; and after hastily pulling on my small-clothes, I went to the door.

"What want you?" I asked sleepily. "Surely this is a queer time of night to wake one out of sleep."

"Let me in, and I will tell you," he replied.

"It will be useless to resist," I thought, "for Otho is master here, and I shall only arouse useless suspicion by refusing." Besides, I was curious to know why he was desirous of seeing me; so without more ado I opened the door. No sooner had I done so, however, than in walked not only Otho, but Benet.

For a time Otho looked at me awkwardly, like one not knowing what to say. But Benet closed the door, and stood with his back against it, holding a candle in his hand.

"Hath Charles landed?" I asked, watching them closely.

"No," replied Otho.

"But something of importance hath taken place," I said; "else why this midnight visit?"

"Yes, important events have happened." He spoke curtly, like one angry.

"And it hath to do with me, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"What then?"

He looked at me keenly for a minute. Then he answered me slowly, according to his usual manner of speech.

"Charles hath not landed," he said. "All the same, important events have happened with which you have to do."

"And they?" I asked, noticing the grin that overspread Benet Killigrew's face.

"Are two in number."

"Name them," I said eagerly.

"First, that your name is not Roger Penryn."

"Yes; what next?"

He seemed surprised that I should make so little ado at his discovery, and stared at me as though waiting for me to say some foolish thing. Whereas the truth was, that I was relieved that the truth was to come to light. I fretted like a horse frets when a saddle rubs him, every time I heard the name of Penryn.

"What next?" I repeated.

"That you are a sneak."

"Steady, steady, Otho Killigrew!" I said, for the word had not a pleasant sound. "But we will deal with these two charges. What are your proofs?"

"There are proofs enough," replied Otho—"proofs enough. One is, that I suspected you as you sat at my father's table last night."

"I thought you were of the ferret breed," I replied; "it is a pity your eyes are not pink."

He kept his temper well. "Believing you were not what you pretended to be, I sent a man to the place you said you came from," he went on. "He hath returned this very night."

"Well thought of," I laughed. "And you made discoveries?"

"My man discovered that there was no Roger Penryn."

I almost felt a pleasure in the business now. I had no qualms when talking with men. All the

same, I knew that I was in dangerous hands. These Killigrews were no fools.

"It seems I must have created a new member of the family," I said pleasantly. "Well, go on."

"No, there is no Roger Penryn; but there is a Roger Trevanion."

"Ah!"

"Yes, a fellow with a bad reputation."

"Nothing like your own, I hope?" I said sneeringly, for I was ill pleased at his discovery.

"A fellow who hath wasted his patrimony."

"He never betrayed women, I hope?" I responded.

"This fellow left his home on a chestnut horse, the servants not knowing whither he went. My man discovered, however, that he stayed at St. Columb and Wadebridge. From thence he came here."

"Ah, your man hath a good nose for scenting."

"Yes, he traced you here, Roger Trevanion."

"Well, Trevanion is a better name than Penryn —far better than Killigrew."

"It's a bad name for a sneak, a liar."

"Have a care, Otho Killigrew!" I said. "You've mentioned that word twice now."

"Yes, I have," he said slowly. "I may mention it again. What then?"

"Only that I shall make you swallow it."

At this Benet grinned again. "Good!" he said aloud. "I like that!"

"I shall say it again, and shall not swallow it."

"You are two to one," I replied, "and you have your lackey outside; but if I hear it again, there

will be a new version of the story about the first-born slain."

He looked at his brother, and then spoke with less assurance.

"I will prove it," he said slowly.

"That is a different matter," I replied. "Go on."

"You have been on the roof of this house to-night."

I made no movement or sound indicating surprise. I had been expecting this.

"Well, what then? Am I a prisoner here?"

"Why were you there?"

"Only to have a talk with your prisoner," I replied. "I was curious to see the beauteous maid who hates you."

I hit him hard there, and he lost his temper.

"Look'ee, Roger Trevanion," speaking quickly and angrily for the first time, "what is the meaning of this masquerade? The Trevanions are Protestants. Why did you come here, pretending to be a Catholic? Why did you climb to the roof? You are a woman-hater."

"Only for a wager," I laughed.

"Mark this!" he cried,—"there are dungeons here as well as battlements."

"So I have heard. And it would be just like a Killigrew to throw a guest into one of them."

"Guest!" he answered with a sneer.

"Yes, guest," I replied.

"You have forfeited your right to that name."

"Prove it. Is it an uncommon thing for a man to travel under a name other than his own?"

"It is an uncommon thing for a guest to get out of his chamber window, and climb to the roof of the house."

"Not if a man is of a curious disposition," I laughed.

So far we had been fencing, and neither had gained much advantage. But I determined to bring matters to a close issue.

"Look you, Otho Killigrew," I said, "you have come to my bedchamber two hours past midnight. Why? You must have something in your mind other than the things you have spoken about."

"I have come to you in mercy."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"In mercy," he repeated. "It is true you have forfeited your right to be considered as a guest. Nevertheless I remember that Trevanion is a good name, and that I am a Killigrew."

I waited for him to continue.

"You had a purpose in coming here. What, I do not know. You have been a—that is, you are not what you pretended to be. You have tried to win my father's confidence, and discover his secrets."

"I did not seek to know your father's secrets."

"No, but you came as a Catholic. You came as one desirous of bringing a Catholic king on the throne. My father welcomes such as his own children. Otherwise you would not have been welcomed so warmly, nor would you have been asked to remain while Polperro sought to degrade us all. It is a weakness of my father to take to

his heart all who belong to old Catholic families, and to trust them blindly——"

"I am waiting for your mercy," I said.

"You have done two things while in this house," said Otho: "you have pretended to side with my father in carrying out the great plan of his life, and as a consequence obtained secrets from him; and you have sought for, and obtained, an interview with my affianced wife. Either of these actions would justify us in dealing with you in a summary fashion. But we have decided on conditions to be merciful."

"Explain."

"I have discovered that you Trevanions never break a promise."

"That must be strange to such as you."

"If you will promise two things, we have decided to let you leave Endellion in no worse condition than you entered it."

"You are very merciful."

"Seeing that you have abused our hospitality, it is."

"Well, about your conditions?"

"Our conditions are very easily complied with. The first is, that you never breathe to any living soul anything which my father has divulged in relation to the cause he loves."

"That is the whole of the first?"

"It is. You see I am trusting you as a Trevanion. I know that if you make a promise you will keep it."

"And the second?"

"The second is different." And I saw that

Otho Killigrew spoke not so easily. He lost that calm self-possession which characterized him when he spoke about the Catholic cause. The blood mounted to his cheek, and his hand trembled.

"Tell me why you climbed the roof of the house!" he cried. "Tell me what happened there!"

"I am waiting to hear the condition," was my answer.

"Are you interested in Mistress Nancy Molesworth? Was that one of your reasons for coming here?" he asked eagerly. "Is she anything to you? Did you ever see her?"

I saw that Otho Killigrew was scarcely master of himself as he spoke of the maid I had seen that night. I remarked also that Benet had an ugly look on his face as he listened.

"I am still waiting to hear the second condition," I said, trying as well as I could to see my way through the business, and decide what steps to take.

"It is this," cried Otho. "You promise not to interest yourself in any way with Mistress Molesworth; that you never speak of her within one month from this time; that you render no assistance in any way to those who seek to baulk me in my purposes."

The last sentence came out seemingly against his will. As luck would have it, too, I turned my eyes in the direction of Benet at this time, and noted the gleam in his eyes.

"If I mistake not," I said to myself, "Benet

loveth not Otho, and it would take but little to make him lift his hand against his brother."

"Why this second condition?" I said, more for the purpose of gaining time than anything else. "What hath Mistress Nancy Molesworth to do with me?"

"How do you know her name is Nancy?" he asked savagely.

"I heard John Polperro name it. But what hath she to do with me?"

"I would not have given you this opportunity," he went on, without heeding my question. "As soon as I knew you had climbed to the roof where she walks, I determined that you should be kept in safety until such time as—as——but it does not matter; Benet would not have it so. He suggested that you should have a chance of escape."

I saw that Benet looked eagerly at me as though he would speak, but by an effort he restrained himself.

"The maid is not in a convent school now," I said jibingly. "She is not to be a nun, I suppose. And I have taken no vow that I will not speak to a maid."

"But you must not speak to her!" he cried, like one beside himself,—"not to her."

"Why, pray?"

"Because," he cried, evidently forgetting the relation in which I stood to him,—"because she is my betrothed wife! Because she belongs to me—only! Because no one but myself must lay hands on her!"

"If she be your betrothed wife, she should love

you," I said. "And if she loves you, perfect trust should exist between you."

"But there be enemies! There be those who——" he hesitated, evidently realizing that he had said more than he had intended. "Will you promise?" he cried.

"And if I do not?" I asked.

"I told you there were dungeons here as well as battlements," he said. "If you will not give your sacred promise, you shall lie there until it is my pleasure to set you free!"

"Tell me this, Otho Killigrew," I said, after thinking a moment. "You say you are betrothed to this maid. Does she willingly become your wife?"

"That is naught to you!"

In truth it was not; and for a moment I was in sore straits what to promise. I had no interest in the maid. She had paid me but scant courtesy that night, and why should I care whom she wedded? Moreover, if I refused to promise I was sure that Otho would carry out his threat. Even were I friendly disposed towards her and John Polperro, I could do them no good by refusing to abide by Otho Killigrew's conditions. Then I remembered the look of loathing on the maid's face as she spoke of the Killigrews, and instinctively I felt that such a marriage would be worse than death to her. I am anything but a sentimental man, neither do I give way to foolish fancy; but at that moment I saw the maid pleading with me not to promise.

"No, I will not accept your last condition," I

said. The words escaped me almost without the consent of my own will, for I felt I dared not sneak out of the house in such a way. After all, I was a Trevanion, and came of an honourable race. My fathers had fought many battles for women in the past. Perhaps some of their spirit came to me as I spoke.

"You will not!" he cried like one amazed.

"No!" I cried, "I will not. Look you, I have seen that maid this very night. If you were a man such as a woman could love, if the maid did not loathe you, I would not have given either of you a second thought. But even although it may not be possible for me to lift a finger on her behalf, I will not bind myself by a promise not to help her. Why, man,"—and my anger got the better of me,—"it were sending a maid to hell to make her the wife of such as you!"

I heard Benet Killigrew laugh. "Good!" he cried; "the fellow's a man!" But Otho was mad with rage. He gave an angry cry, and then leaped on me; but I threw him from me. I looked around for my sword; but before I could reach it, the two men I had seen acting as sentinels rushed into the room, and I was overpowered.

Still I made a fair fight. Twice did I throw the men from me, and I know that they carried bruises for many a day. But one unarmed man against three is weary work, and at length I was dragged from the room. One thing I could not help noticing, however: Benet took no part in the business. He simply held the candle and

looked on, occasionally uttering cries of joy when I seemed to be getting the best of the battle.

When I was left alone in a room at the basement of the castle, I at first upbraided myself because of my foolishness. I had acted the part of a madman. And yet, on reconsidering the matter, I did not see what I could have done other than what I did. True, my prison walls might hinder me, but my promise did not. It might be possible to escape in spite of the bolts of a jailer—my people had done this often; but none had ever tried to escape from their promises. Then I thought of my promise to Peter Trevisa. Well, I knew not at the time I undertook his work what I knew when I lay imprisoned, or I would not have made it. Besides, I could pay the forfeit. The bargain was honourably made. If I failed to bring the maid to him within a certain time, I had lost Trevanion. My debt of honour would be paid.

On reflection, therefore, though I was ill pleased at being confined in that dark cell, I felt strangely light-hearted. I was no longer acting a lie. I should no longer skulk under the name of Penryn. I did not believe the Killigrews would murder me, neither would they starve me. I was not a weakling, and I could look for means of escape. If I could succeed in gaining my freedom, I vowed I would take away the maid Nancy Molesworth, if for no other reason than to spite the Killigrews.

Presently morning came, and I was able to see more plainly where I was, and what my prison

was like. The place was really a cellar, and but little light found its way there. True, there was a window; but it was very narrow, revealing a small aperture, the sides of which were composed of strong masonry. Over the aperture was a heavy iron grating, which grating was on a level with the courtyard. The window, too, was securely guarded with heavy iron bars. The door was strongly made of oak, and iron studded. The sight of these things made my heart heavy; escape seemed impossible.

The hours dragged heavily on, and I grew weary of waiting. But presently I heard footsteps outside. The two knaves who had obeyed the bidding of Otho Killigrew entered, one bearing food and the other my clothes. Neither spoke, although the one I had known as Sam Daddo looked less surly than the other. I remembered that he was a lover of Mistress Nancy Molesworth's serving-maid, and tried to think how I could turn this fact to account. They did not stay, but presently returned, bringing a small, roughly made couch.

"Evidently," I thought, "it is intended that I shall be kept a prisoner for some time."

After this I was left alone. It is needless to say that I tried to make many plans of escape; but they all died at their birth, for each seemed more futile than the other. I tried the strength of the window bars, and found that they did not yield to pressure. I listened at the door in the hope of hearing sounds whereby I might be able to more exactly locate my prison. This also was in vain.

At mid-day another meal was brought to me, but no word was spoken.

Still I did not despair. True, I dared take no steps for escape through the day, for footsteps were constantly crossing the courtyard outside. But when night came I would try the window bars again. I noticed an iron clamp on the couch which had been brought. Possibly I could use that as an instrument whereby I could prise open the window.

My spirits, I remember, kept wonderfully high, for I could not fully realize that I was a prisoner. In truth, the whole matter seemed to me a sort of dream out of which I should presently awake. For on analyzing my thoughts, I saw no reason why I should be interested in Mistress Nancy Molesworth. Indeed, I laughed at myself as a foolish dreamer for refusing to promise not to render her any assistance should she wish to escape Otho Killigrew. Perhaps my bargain with old Peter Trevisa and his son had somewhat to do with it. The rest I put down to the foolish impulse of the moment. For why should the memory of her face make me grow angry with Otho? Were I a woman, I would rather be wedded to him than to young Peter Trevisa. Concerning Benet's behaviour, I could come to no definite conclusion, although I formed many conjectures. But I did not trouble, for presently I fancied I saw a weakness in my prison, and thought I saw a means of obtaining my freedom.

My evening meal was brought by a serving-man whom I had not hitherto seen, accompanied

by Sam Daddo. Just as if I remained a guest, I spoke to Daddo in a friendly fashion, and asked after the health of his master. He spoke no word in reply, however, although I was sure I saw him wink at me in a meaning way. I was not slow to interpret this, especially when, a few seconds later, I saw it repeated. He remained silent, however, in spite of my frequent questions, so I gave up talking, continuing only to watch. This was not in vain, for as the strange serving-man was passing out of the door, Sam, in following him, put his right hand behind his back and revealed a piece of paper. This I snatched at eagerly, though noiselessly, wondering what it might mean.

Ere long I was able to examine it, for my gaolers locked the door, and I listened to their footsteps as they traversed a passage, and climbed some stone steps.

Lifting my couch, and placing it against the door so that I might not be surprised, I went to my window and unfolded the piece of paper I had taken from Sam Daddo's hand. Only a few words were written thereon, but enough to give me food for thought. This was what I read:

"*I hope I have misjudged you. Forgive me if I have. I have heard of all that took place after you left me last night. I grieve much that you should be a prisoner because of me; but means may be offered for your escape. I need a friend sorely, for I am in dire danger, and I am a weak, ignorant girl. Once at Polperro, I should be safe. The one*

who gives you this may not help you, although he would not willingly harm me. Unless help comes I shall be wedded to O. in a week, and I welcome the thought of death more."

As I said, this missive gave me much food for thought. It was evidently written by Mistress Nancy Molesworth. Little consideration was needed, moreover, to assure me that she must be in sore straits or she would not have sought to enlist the sympathy of a prisoner. A few hours before she had spurned me as a liar. But I bore her no grudge for that—I had deserved it. It was apparent Sam Daddo had told his sweetheart what had passed between Otho Killigrew and myself. He had doubtless listened at the door, and heard all. This, perchance, had led the maid to write me. Yet she knew not what was in my mind, and must risk much in trusting me. She seemed to regard my escape as a possibility, and therefore built upon it. I must confess, too, that her helplessness appealed to me, and a feeling of joy surged in my heart at the thought of striking a blow for her liberty.

But what could I do? Concerning this, I thought long and carefully, but could fix my mind on no definite plan save to wrench the iron clamp from my couch, and apply it to what I thought a weak spot in my window. The result of this was doubtful, and could not be attempted until late at night when the family had gone to bed. I therefore waited several hours, and then, after listening carefully, I commenced my work.

A minute later I stopped suddenly, for I heard footsteps outside. Then the door opened, and Benet Killigrew entered.

CHAPTER IX.

BENET KILLIGREW AS A WRESTLER.

On entering my prison, he closed the door and locked it. Then, putting the key in his pocket, he placed the candle he had brought on a shelf, and faced me.

"I like you, Roger Trevanion," he said. "You are a man after my own heart."

I shrugged my shoulders, showing no surprise at his presence, but wondering what was in his mind. "Why?" I asked.

"Because you are a man. It did my soul good to see you beard Otho, and struggle with those fellows. By my faith, I fair itched to help you!"

I could see he had something in his mind. If I kept my head cool, and my ears open, I might discover something of importance. I remembered, too, the look he had given his brother as he spoke of his feelings towards Mistress Nancy Molesworth, and drew my conclusions accordingly.

"But you struck no blow," I said.

"That would have been fool's work. I dared not go against my own brother before the servants. Indeed, ill as I would have liked it, had you proved too much for them, I should have lent them a helping hand."

I was silent, wondering what he was driving at.

"I had this meeting in my mind," he continued. "I determined to come and see you when Otho was safe asleep."

"You are afraid of Otho," I said, drawing a bow at a venture.

"Who would not be?" he cried savagely. "Otho is as cunning as the devil. He should have been a priest. He hath all the learning of the family, and can wriggle his way like an adder. Oh, I speak plainly now! I gloried to hear you give him word for word. Even I dare not do so."

I had been summing up the nature of the man as he spoke, and thought I saw whereby I could make him unloose his tongue more freely still.

"I can see he is master here," I said. "All you have to obey every movement of his finger. You seem like children in his hands, or like dogs who have to fetch and carry at his bidding."

"He hath won the confidence of my father," he cried harshly, "and so it is 'Otho this,' and 'Otho that.'"

"While Benet, who is twice as big a man, and twice as handsome, is nobody," I said. "It is Otho who will get Endellion, Otho who will marry Mistress Nancy Molesworth and get Restormel," —and I laughed in a sneering kind of way.

"No,—by the mass, no, if you will help me!"

"I help you!"—this I said in a tone of surprise. All the same, I expected something of this sort.

"I could see you pitied the maid," he went on. "I could see that a man of inches like you thought

it was a shame for a maid such as she to be wedded to such a shambling creature as he."

"She should have a man like you," I suggested.

"Ah, you see it!" he cried. "I thought so last night. I said, Here is a man who knows a man!"—and he drew himself up with a sort of mountebank bravado.

"But I am kept out of it," he continued. "She is not allowed to think of me. She is not allowed even to see me. I must not speak to her. It's all Otho, Otho. He must have Endellion, he must have Restormel, and he must have the maid, too."

"And he seems to love her."

"Love her! With the cunning love of a priest. But it is not the love of a man such as I. If she could see me, talk with me, all would be different!"

"You think she would love you?"

"Maidens have not been wont to say me nay," he said, strutting around as vainly as a peacock.

"But what hath all this to do with me?"

"Ah, yes!" he cried; "I had forgotten. Otho hath embittered my father against you. He hath warned all the servants against you. You are to be kept here until Otho is wedded to Nancy."

"And then?"

"I cannot say yet. But if Otho hath his will it will go ill with you. But I have brains and power as well as Otho. I marked you last night, and I know that you, too, love the sight of a man."

I could not help smiling at the fellow's vanity. But I said nothing.

"You refused Otho's conditions last night, and

you are here because of it. Look you, I will get you out of this if you like."

"How?"

"Oh, Otho hath not everything his own way. I have friends as well as he. If you will help me, you shall be free. Is it to be a bargain?"

"How help you?"

"Otho hath ceased to suspect me. He thinks I have given up all thoughts of wedding Nancy, seeing that my father hath willed that he shall wed her."

I waited in silence.

"A priest is coming here from Padstow shortly," he went on. "It is intended that Otho and Nancy shall be wedded before he leaves. If you will help me, we will baulk him. I will take her away. I know a parson near Bodmin, and he will wed her to me."

"Whether the maid wills or no?"

"She will be glad enough to wed me, I'll lay to that,"—and again he strutted around the room.

"And how will you do this?" I asked.

"Nay, I will not tell you until I get your promise. Give me your word, Roger Trevanion, and I will tell you how you shall get out of this hole; also my plans for taking away the maid Nancy from the marriage altar."

In truth, I felt less inclined to give my promise to Benet than to Otho; but I had become more cautious.

"But why need you my help?" I asked.

"Because,"—he unlocked the door and listened carefully before replying; then, after locking it

again, came back to me, and continued: "Because Otho hath bewitched almost everybody, and because I need such a man as you to carry out my plans."

"But at least you can tell me what you wish me to do?"

"I want you to help me to take her from here, and carry her to Bodmin. After that, I care not."

"But there will be danger," I said. "I must know something more about the matter before I give you my word."

"Nay, I will tell you no more!" he cried angrily.

"And if I refuse?"

He gave no answer, but looked black. Whereupon I bethought me of the usual plan of those who are undecided.

"I must have time to think," I said; "this request of yours hath come upon me suddenly. Come to me to-morrow night at this time and I will give you my answer."

"And in the mean time you are a gentleman?" he queried.

"I am a prisoner."

"But you will not speak to the serving-men about what hath been spoken in confidence?"

"There is surely no need to ask me such a question," I said.

He looked at me keenly.

"It is well, Roger Trevanion," he said. "I shall look on you as my ally and prepare accordingly. I can trust you, for you are a man, and love men. By the mass, they shall all know that Benet is more than a match for Otho! Good-night, Tre-

vanion. I am ill pleased that you should have to spend another night in this hole, but it may not be helped. I will have my plans ready by to-morrow night,—and then——"

He strutted towards the door as he spoke, taking the key from his pocket meanwhile.

My heart gave a great leap, for a daring plan came into my mind. I had no time to consider its value, for it required instant action. I determined to put it to the test without delay.

"Wait a moment, Killigrew," I said. "There is just another matter before you go."

He turned around willingly. I could see he was in no haste to depart.

"You are sure our conversation hath not been heard?" I said, looking at him steadily.

"Do you think I am a fool?" he said vainly. "I went to the door to see that Otho had not ferreted us out. As for the guard, I told him to keep away until I came back."

My heart seemed to be in my mouth, for this fell in exactly with the plan that had been so suddenly born in my mind.

"It is well," I replied. Then I waited a second, measuring Benet with my eye. "You have told me that I am a man after your own heart," I continued presently. "You said you could trust me because I could fight. But it seems I must take you on trust. It is ill undertaking a difficult and dangerous piece of work with a man who may be able to do nothing but talk."

His eyes burnt red, a fierce expression flashed across his face.

"Do you say that to me—Benet Killigrew?" he said in tones of angry wonder.

"Yes, to you," I replied, still keeping my eyes steadily upon him. I saw the vexation pass away, and in its place came a look of wild joy.

"You want to know if I can fight—whether I have courage?" he cried eagerly.

"Ah!" I cried in the same tone.

"There is one way you can know," he continued. "Try now, will you?"

He had swallowed my bait without a doubt. He had not even guessed the thought in my mind. In his joy at the thought of battle he had snatched as eagerly at my suggestion as a hungry dog snatches at a bone.

"Yes, it will be well," I replied. "You want me to help you in a dangerous business. You may fail me at a dangerous pinch, for aught I know. You might show the white feather."

"Benet Killigrew fail to fight!" he cried in wonder. "Why, let me fetch swords, man. By the mass, I have been longing for months to find a man worthy of being called a man!"

"We cannot fight with swords," I said. "Even here we should arouse the house. The sound of steel reacheth far."

"With fists, then!" he cried.

"Let's try a hitch first; after that we can use fists!"

He grasped my hand with a cry of joy. "I said you were a man after my own heart," he said eagerly. "I love a fight beyond all things. I

have been longing for one,—ay, longing! But there hath been no man who would dare stand before me. I am afraid it will go hard with you, for I can barely govern myself when my blood is up. But I will not hurt you too much, for I love you, Trevanion. I love any man who will dare fight with Benet Killigrew!"

So far I had got my way. In spite of his boasting, I did not wonder at his brother being able to manage him easily. In the business of scheming he would be but a child to Otho. And still I was doubtful. He was as big, if not a bigger, man than myself. Doubtless he knew every trick of a wrestler and a fighter. I took note of his great thews and sinews. He carried himself with ease, and his step was springy. Still, I did not see any other means of carrying out my purposes; for although I had determined to try and escape through the window, I had very little hopes of succeeding. I therefore took off my shoes, and threw them into the corner of the room; then I divested myself of my coat. Benet growled like a dog enjoying a bone as he followed my example.

"I wish we had wrestling shirts," he said with a laugh, and his eyes gleamed with fierce joy. "Had I known, I would have prepared for this."

I did not speak, but held out my hand for him to shake. He gripped me hard, and gave a grunt of satisfaction.

"A man's hand!" he said.

I placed my right hand across his shoulders, and caught him firmly; and when I had done this I felt more doubtful than ever as to the result. Benet

Killigrew had not boasted of his strength in vain. The fellow was a giant. I felt his great chest heave. If ever a man felt the joy of battle, it was he. I am sure he forgot everything of his plans, and of our relations to each other, in the gladness of the moment. I knew, too, the moment he placed his hands upon me that he was a wrestler. He heeded not the fact that the floor on which we stood was of stone, barely covered with a thin layer of barley straw.

He felt my body carefully, but giving away no chance thereby. He seemed to gloat over the opportunity of testing his own muscles.

"A man's chest!" he grunted. "By heaven, I love you, Trevanion!"

Then I saw that he was trying for the "loin throw," and prepared myself for his advances. Thus it was when he thought to accomplish his purpose I was ready for him, and for a moment held him at advantage.

"Ah!" he cried, "better and better!"

But I knew that every power I possessed would have to be used, for by this time the fierce longing for mastery had come over him. Never did I feel so glad as at that moment that I had been true to the traditions of my race and county. For the Trevanions, although the sport had during the last few years been kept alive by the common people, had always been noted as wrestlers, and that in the county which, man to man, could challenge Europe.

While I had the advantage, therefore, I gripped him for a hug. Had he been a weaker man his

ribs would have cracked like matches, indeed, had he been able to hold me so, I doubt whether the struggle would have continued a minute longer. But he had caught a deep breath, and I might as well have sought to crush a tree as Benet Killigrew. So I gave up the hug and he laughed like a boy.

"A good try!" he grunted, and then he tested me sorely. My sinews seemed likely to crack, so great was the strain that he put upon them, while the sweat came out over my forehead, and rolled down my face. However I held my ground, and when at length he failed in the cross hitch, I began to have more confidence. Especially did I hope for victory as I heard him mutter savagely, "By Cormoran, he's my match!"

So then I determined to be careful. I hoped that he had lessened his power of endurance by the wine-drinking, wild life he had lived. I therefore acted on the defensive until I should be able to try the throw I had often practised. Presently I thought his grip less mighty, but I was not sure, for never in my life had I been held by such a man. Had he been less confident of victory, he would perchance have been a better wrestler, but he did not seem to think that even his muscles must presently give way. So it came about that while he tried a dozen tricks, and put forth much strength in so doing, I used what power I had more warily. At length I thought I saw my chance, and so I prepared for what wrestlers call "the flying mare." In getting the grip necessary for this throw, I had to face the

danger of placing myself in his power. However, I ventured to do this, for by no other way could I throw him. He saw my move immediately, and took advantage of it, and for a minute I was afraid that all was over with me. Never in my life had I struggled so hard. I saw balls of fire flash before my eyes, while my sinews seemed likely to snap at any moment. His grip grew weaker, however, in spite of his frantic struggles. I heard him panting like a mad dog, for I believe he then realised for the first time that I should master him. Then with all the strength of shoulders, back, and loins I used the trick I had intended, and Benet Killigrew, giant though he was, went flying across the room, his head striking the floor with a terrible thud.

For a moment I was afraid I had killed him, but only for a moment; I had seen such throws before, and knew the result. He would lie stunned for a few minutes, and then when he came to consciousness he would be dazed for the next half-hour. This was what I hoped for, and for which I had been struggling.

After wiping the sweat from my brow, I seized Benet's jacket and put it on. As luck would have it, the garment fitted me well. Then I took my money from my pockets. Otho had left me this, for which, as you may be sure, I felt thankful.

After this I cast my eyes around me again, for I remembered that Benet had worn his hat when he came to see me. This I put on; so being about his height, and wearing his hat and coat, I fancied I should be able, except in bright light,

to pass myself for him. My sword I gave up hope of getting; but my pistols were in my saddle-bags.

Giving Killigrew a last look, and noting that he was still breathing, I unlocked the door, and in a few seconds later was in the passage outside. The candle which I took with me, although it burnt low, showed me where to go. I therefore groped along the dark pathway, and climbed the steps which led to the entrance hall. Here I saw a man leaning against the wall. I had extinguished my light, and as the hall was dimly lighted the fellow could not see me plainly.

"All right, Maester Benet?" asked the man sleepily.

"Yes," I answered in a whisper, motioning him to be silent. Evidently Benet's actions were not of an orderly nature, for he seemed to take but little notice when I made my way towards the side door, out of which I had gone when I followed Amelia Lantelgos.

Arrived there, however, I was likely to be found out, for the man came after me.

"The kay, Maaster Benet; I shall want the kay if you be goin' out!"

I flung it to him, therefore, and before the fellow came near me was outside the walls of the house. Overjoyed at my success, I drew a deep breath, but I dared not linger. In a few minutes Benet would probably return to consciousness, and would hammer at the prison door which I had locked. I therefore found my way to the courtyard, hoping to reach the stables without ac-

cident, for I determined not to leave Chestnut behind me. I had barely crossed the yard when I saw a man. Evidently old Colman Killigrew was afraid of his neighbours, else he would not have his house guarded so carefully.

"Who's that?" asked the man. "Es et Maaster Benet?"

Mimicking Benet's voice as well as I was able, I bade him saddle the stranger's horse.

"What stranger?" asked the man.

"He who came two nights ago," I replied, "I want to ride the beggar."

The man gave a laugh, and went to the stables without a word.

"Put on his own saddle," I said, blessing Benet for having led his serving-men to obey his strange whims without questioning.

The man put a lighted candle in a lanthorn, and began to saddle Chestnut, but in this he found a difficulty. The horse had not been in the habit of obeying any other voice than mine. He snapped at the fellow so viciously, that he left the stall.

"He's a oogly beggar, Maaster. I can't saddle un. He's a booty to look top, but I wudden ride un ef I wos you. I spoase you've locked up the gen'l'man, ain't ee?"

"Stand still, Chestnut," I said in my own voice. The horse recognized me, and gave a joyful whinney.

Instantly the fellow suspected me. He saw that I was not his master, and moved towards the door. I was sorry to do it, but it could not be

helped. I struck him a heavy blow and he fell heavily on the ground.

"If you move or make a noise you are a dead man," I said.

"My Gor!" muttered the fellow, "tes the gen-'leman hisself."

In a few seconds I saddled Chestnut; then I determined to use him further.

"Come with me," I said.

"Where, sur?" he asked tremblingly.

"Show me the nearest way to the high-road," I said. "If you deceive me, I'll kill you. I want to avoid the lodge gates too."

He obeyed me without a word. A few minutes later I was on a cart-track which led in the direction of Endellion village.

"Laive me go back, sur," pleaded the man. "I waan't tell nothin', and they may vind out that I've left the courtyard. Hark, they have vound out!"

I heard men shouting as he spoke.

"Laive me go back, sur," he continued to plead; "this trail do laid to the high-road, you caan't go wrong."

I let him go, for he could be of no further use to me; then I gave Chestnut rein, and a few minutes later was safe on the high-road.

CHAPTER X.

THE ESCAPE FROM ENDELLION.

All the events which I have just described happened so suddenly that I had been able to think of nothing beyond obtaining my liberty. On reaching the high-road, however, I began to cast about for my course of procedure. Knowing that I should probably be followed, I had to decide quickly, but although I racked my wits sorely, I could settle upon nothing that pleased me. For, foolish as it may seem, no sooner was I away from Endellion, than I wanted to be back again, and now that it seemed impossible for me to keep my bargain with Peter Trevisa, I felt more than ever determined to take the maid Nancy Molesworth to Treviscoe. I found myself constantly pitying her too, and wondering how she would fare among the Killigrews. My first determination to ride towards London I abandoned, and so I rode on dejectedly until I bethought me of a sentence which Benet Killigrew had let drop about a priest coming from Padstow who was to wed Mistress Nancy to Otho. This decided me, and without more ado I touched Chestnut's side with my heels, and rode towards St. Enedock, from which I had heard I should be able to get a ferry-boat to take me across the Camel River to Padstow. Although the road was none of the best, I reached St. Enedock in a little more than

an hour; and then I began to look about me to obtain the ferry-boat.

Did I not believe I was hardly pressed for time, I should have stayed at this village for some time, for it was talked about throughout the county. It had been averred that the whole place was often covered with sand, while the church was so much buried that the people often had a difficulty in entering. Indeed report had it that the vicar only conducted a service therein once a year so as to be able to claim his tithes, and in order to do this he had to climb in at one of the windows.

Although it was but two hours past midnight I succeeded in waking the ferryman, who lived in a hut close by the river, and after some argument succeeded in persuading him to take me across. Long before we had reached the little landing-place at Padstow, I found that he was somewhat of a character, and possessed strong religious views.

"I can see you are a staunch Protestant," I said after a good deal of talking on his part.

"Down with Popery I do zay, sur," was his response.

"And yet one of your great families are Papists."

"You do main the Rosecarricks."

"No."

"Who then; the Killigrews?"

"Yes."

"They belong to th' ould Sur Nick, and the young Killigrews be sons of hell," he cried with energy.

"Supposing one of them were to come enquiring of you whether I came across here?" I asked.

He looked at me keenly.

"Be you a Protestant?" he asked.

"Sound," I replied.

"And p'r'aps you doan't want me to know who you be?" he queried slyly.

"You are a clever man," I answered.

"Then they shaan't know," he said with a grin, "onnly you must know, sur, I allays charge double in sich cases."

I laughed, and promised him this, feeling myself in fortune's way.

"Any time, sur, night or day, I'm yer sarvent," he cried when I had paid him his money. "My brother do work the ferry from this side, sur, and 'ee's ov the saame opinions as I be. I'll spaik to un, sur. I'll tell un 'bout ee. You can allays depend on we, sur."

I found Padstow to be an ugly little fishing village, while the inn to which I went provided but poor accommodation, even after I had spent a good half-hour in arousing the landlord. However Chestnut was well stabled and foddered, so I minded but little, especially as I found the innkeeper willing to talk.

I was not long in discovering that only one Papist priest lived at Padstow, and that very few of the people were of his persuasion. Indeed, although the priest lodged with a Papist family in the town, he spent much of his time in visiting the few Catholic families in the neighbourhood. He went often to the Arundells at Lanherne, to the

Rosecarricks, and to the Killigrews at Endellion.

"Do the people hate him?" I asked.

"That they doan't," replied the innkeeper; "he's the jolliest ould chap you ever zeed. I tell 'ee, sur, ef oal the priests 'ad a-bin like he, I doan't b'leeve we Cornish people wud 'ave changed our religion years agone."

After learning all I could from him, I went to bed, determined to find the priest next day, and discover his relations with the Killigrews. Although I little expected it, I fell asleep almost immediately, nor did I wake until late the following morning, when the landlord came to my door asking "whether I would 'ave a scrowled salt pilchard, 'am rasher, or conger pie for my breakfast."

As soon as I could I started out to find the priest, but on going to the house at which he stayed I found that he would not be home until night. He had gone to Lanherne the previous day, on urgent business, but had bade the woman prepare for his coming about nine o'clock. This gave me time to look about me, and prepare for his coming.

Much as I disliked appearing in a disguise, I saw that I should defeat my own purposes if I presented myself to the priest as Roger Trevanion. I therefore bought a suit of homely garments but such as a gentleman might wear on holiday occasions. I was also able to purchase a good sword, which done I felt myself ready to meet the priest. It was therefore with much impatience that I waited until nine o'clock, the hour when he

was supposed to arrive; then remembering that probably he would want food after his journey I decided to put off my visit until half an hour later. For it is well known that a man is more inclined to be trustful and friendly after a meal than before. It was turned half-past nine, therefore, before I presented myself at his lodgings. I was immediately shown into the room in which he sat.

"What want you of me, my son?" he asked.

"I wish to know when you could perform the marriage rite, father," I asked, noting the friendly and unsuspicious way with which his eyes rested on me.

"Ha," he said kindly, "then you are one of the few faithful ones yet to be found in the country. You look on marriage as a sacrament, and not a mere legal business like the heretics of these parts."

"I trust so, father. When could you wed us?"

"Is the maid here in Padstow?" he asked.

"Nay," I replied. "She is at present with heretics, but she is of the true faith."

"What is her name, my son?"

Then I told him a tale I had been weaving through the day, and which was so plausible that he did not appear to doubt it.

"I could wed you to-morrow," he said at length, for it will be remembered that this took place in 1745, eight years before the famous law passed by Lord Hardwicke, through whose influence it was decreed that banns of marriage must be publicly announced in the parish church in order for the ceremony to be legal.

"I do not think I could bring her here to-morrow," I said cautiously.

"Then I am afraid you will have to wait a few days, my son," he replied.

"Why father?" I asked.

"Because to-morrow night I go to the Killigrews at Endellion, and shall stay there three or four days."

"You know when you will return from Endellion, I suppose?" I asked quietly.

"I shall stay no longer than four days," was his reply; "at the end of that time I must return."

"So if I came to you after that time, all would be well?"

"Yes; but speak not of it, my son, we of the true faith are sorely harried in this country. Cornish people love not the Stuarts, although in some countries their return is longed for. Until the right time comes, we must be cautious."

I knew all I desired now, and should be able to act accordingly. My journey had not been in vain, and before long I left him, my head all a-whirl with many thoughts. I waited not an hour longer at Padstow, and not wishing to cross the river again by means of the ferry, I determined to ride to Wadebridge, and from thence make my way to the village of St. Kew, where I could leave Chestnut, and then go afoot to Endellion, which was only two miles away.

This I did, passing through Wadebridge without any one noticing me, and arriving at St. Kew about five o'clock in the morning. After breakfast I walked to Endellion and looked carefully

around me, for I was again in the Killigrews' country. There were but a few houses in the village, and I could easily discover what I wanted to know, if I cared to ask of the cottagers; but this I would not do, for it is well known that people with little to interest them talk much about what any stranger may say. I therefore waited until after eight o'clock, and then to my delight I saw Jennifer Lanteglos leave one of the cottages, and make her way towards the fields near. This was what I desired; so, unseen by her and by the cottagers, I followed. When she had passed through two fields I overtook her and spoke kindly.

"Whither away, Jennifer my fine maid?" I asked.

She gave a start. "Plaise, sur, I be going to teel taetis" (till potatoes), she replied like one in fear.

"You remember me, Jennifer?" I queried, for the girl seemed too frightened to lift her eyes to mine.

"Oa iss, sur. I've 'eerd 'bout 'ee. Do 'ee be careful, sur, do 'ee."

"Hath Amelia been home lately?" I asked.

"Aw iss, laast night, sur."

"Did she tell you aught?"

"Iss, sur. She towld me 'bout you, sur."

"And what thought she about me?"

"She 'ardly knawed what to think, sur, 'cept that you be a braave strong gentleman."

"And did she tell you what her mistress thought about me?

The girl shook her head.

"Look you, Jennifer, I want to see your sister to-night."

"Doan't 'ee try to, sur. They be purtly maazed weth 'ee up at the 'ouse. They 'll kill 'ee, sur. Doan't 'ee go nist (near) 'em, sur."

I saw she was in earnest, and that she was anxious for my welfare.

"Jennifer," I said, "your sister loves her young mistress, doesn't she?"

"Oa iss, sur, that she doth."

"And she wants a friend right badly?"

"Oa iss, sur, I musn't say nothin', but she do, sur.

"Then look here, Jennifer, you must go to Endellion this day and see your sister. You must tell her to come here this night."

At first the maid was much frightened, but I succeeded in persuading her at length. I also told her what she must say, and how she must carry out my plans.

"Your sister must be here at nine o'clock this night," I said, "here by this stile. You must go up to the house at once, and tell her to find out all she can through the day. Tell her I would befriend her young mistress. You must not plant any potatoes to-day, Jennifer. Here is a crown piece for your trouble."

This done, I went back to St. Kew. I felt at ease in my mind that Jennifer would fullfil my mission, and I hoped that Nancy Molesworth would not hesitate to fall in with the plans I had conceived. I remained at St. Kew all the day, not stirring outside the inn, until it was time for

me to go to meet Amelia Lanteglos. When I arrived at the stile, no one was to be seen, and I feared much that the maid had failed me, but I had not waited long before I saw two women coming towards me. These proved to be Mistress Nancy Molesworth's serving-maid and her sister Jennifer. So far all was well.

At first Amelia Lanteglos was chary of speech, but at length she spoke freely, and told me all that had happened at the house. Sam Daddo had told her that the Killigrews were searching for me, and that should they find me it would go ill with me.

"And Benet Killigrew?" I asked.

"Ee es more maazed than anybody, sur. Ee do zay as ow 'ee went down where you wos put, to zee that you wos saafe, and that you took 'im unawares like. Ee do vow 'ee'll kill 'ee, sur, for you ded strick an unfair blaw."

"And your mistress?" I asked presently, after the maid had talked about Benet's passion; "What of her, Amelia?

"I'm afraid she'll go luny, sur. She do 'aate the thot of marryin' Maaster Otho, and she do zay a priest es comin' to-morra to marry 'er to 'im."

"And does she trust me, Amelia?"

"I dunnaw, sur. I believe she do sometimes. She wud be glad to do anything to git away from they Killigrews."

"Would she be willing to take a bold step to get away from Endellion Castle?" I asked her.

"She caan't, sur. She's watched night and day."

"But if means were offered?"

"Aw, sur, she wud git away ef she could."

After this I did my best to test the maid's loyalty and devotion to her mistress, for I was risking everything upon the plan I had formed, and did not want to be hasty.

"Amelia," I said presently, "I want you to tell your mistress that I desire to be her friend. I would take her from yon den, and on my oath as a gentleman I seek to free her from the Killigrews. Tell her also that if she will be willing to obey me I will effect her escape."

"How, sur?" asked the maid, who trembled violently.

"Benet Killigrew wants her," I said.

"He did, sur, but I believe 'ee's gived up the thot now; besides my mistress do 'aate Maaster Benet as much as the other."

"That may be, but you must deceive him."

"Ow, sir?"

"In this way. Benet Killigrew has been planning to carry your mistress away. That was the reason he came down to me in that cell where I was imprisoned at Endellion. He wanted me to help him, and offered me my liberty on condition that I would help to carry out his plans. His design is to take her to a priest near Bodmin. Well, I want you to tell your mistress that she must consent to this, and you must convey the news to Benet. Do you understand?"

"But she wudden't, sur, she wudden't!"

"Tell her that she must arrange for Benet to get horses and be ready to take her away to-morrow night."

"But, sur, the priest es comin' to marry 'er to Maaster Otho to-morra night. Besides she'd ruther die than go away aloan with Maaster Benet."

"Then Benet must also get a horse for you, and you must accompany your mistress. You must ride through Endellion village, and when you get to the four cross-roads on the other side, I shall meet you—do you see?"

"But what good 'll that be?"

"You must see to it, that only Benet come with you, and then I shall stop you and take your mistress away from him."

"But you cudden, sur; he's a terable fighter, and wud kill 'ee."

"Who came off best when we fought the other night? I tell you, you need not fear."

Slowly the girl grasped my meaning, and, after many protestations, she agreed to carry my message to her mistress.

"You are sure that the Killigrews intend marrying her to Otho to-morrow night?"

"Aw, iss, sur."

"Well go back now, and tell your mistress what I have said to you. Then to-morrow morning Jennifer must go to you, and you must tell her if she hath consented to my plans. Mind, if you betray me, or if you fail, you will have sent your mistress to a place worse than hell."

The maid protested much, and I had to content myself with walking back to St. Kew with her assurance that she would do her utmost. In spite of my excitement my heart was heavy with mis-

givings, for the more I considered what I had done, the more did difficulties present themselves. How could the maid Nancy be expected to trust me? Only once had I seen her, and then she had torn my lying disguise from me in a minute. I had left her convicted of deceit. Was it likely then that she should undertake to obey my behests? Might not my protection seem worse than that of Benet Killigrew? Would she not rather become the wife of Otho than trust to me?

These and a thousand other disquieting thoughts filled my mind as I walked back to the inn. And yet I had had hopes. If the maid hated the Killigrews so much, would she not risk anything to escape them? Had she not written me a letter, and therein told me that she would trust me? But if she did, could I carry out my plans? Supposing she trusted to Benet, and he brought her to the four cross-ways, could I take her from him? I had beaten him at wrestling, but was I a better swordsman?

Then I laughed at my own anxiety, and wondered why I cared so much. Why should I trouble? I tried to analyze my own thoughts. Should I take her to Peter Trevisa's if I succeeded in mastering Benet? That were poor return for the maid's trust; nay, it would stamp me as a base trickster. And yet had I not promised Trevisa? Was I not day by day spending his money? Again and again I felt like giving up the whole business; but when I encouraged such a thought the remembrance of Nancy Molesworth's face would come to me, and I saw her just as

when she laid her hand on my arm on the roof of the house, and said: "I am alone, helpless. I am surrounded by those I cannot trust. I hate—loathe the thought of——" Then in spite of myself I found myself gripping the hilt of my sword, and setting my teeth together while I vowed to set her at liberty. I found joy in the thought of beating the Killigrews too, and laughed as I thought of their discomfiture.

But I need not tell of all my fears, notwithstanding they worried me sorely, and when I made my way towards the stile the following morning I had almost prepared myself to be told that the maid Nancy would not trust me.

I found Jennifer Lanteglos waiting for me. She had just come from the house of the Killigrews.

"Have you seen your sister this morning?" I asked.

"Iss, sur."

"Well?" and I waited impatiently for her to speak.

"Ef you plaise, sur, they'll come."

I know not why, but my heart seemed to have a difficulty in beating.

"Hath Mistress Nancy spoken to Benet?" I asked excitedly.

"No, sur, but 'Melia 'ave. Maaster Benet wos took in a minit."

"And he'll arrange the escape?"

"Iss, sur, they be going to leave the house at nine o'clock."

"How?"

"I dunnaw, sur. 'Melia ded'n tell me, she 'ad n' time. But she'll do et, sur."

That was all the wench could tell me, and so I had to be content. How Benet was to deceive Otho, how they were to escape without detection, I knew not. It was an anxious day that I passed, but I comforted myself with the thought that Mistress Nancy Molesworth was not to be imposed upon, and that she would see to it that all my behests were obeyed. All the same, as I thought of the many things which might take place, I cursed myself as a numskull for not devising a better plan; for I fancied I saw a hundred ways better than the one I had marked out.

At nine o'clock I dismounted from Chestnut at the four cross-ways, ready, as I thought, for whatever might happen. I looked around me, for it was bright moonlight, and took note of the position. It was a lonely spot, a mile from the house, so unless the party were followed we were not likely to be troubled with interference.

After I had waited a quarter of an hour or so, and heard no sounds I became sorely impatient. Had Benet seen through the scheme and taken her the other way? Had Otho discovered the plot? Had Amelia proved false? Had Nancy changed her mind at the last minute? I called myself a fool for caring so much, but at that time I was in a fever, and I chafed finely as I strode to and fro.

More than half an hour had passed, and I had put my foot in the stirrup to ride towards Endellion, when I heard the sound of horses' hoofs; a

minute or so later I saw a man and two women riding towards me.

I drew my sword, and waited.

CHAPTER XI.

MY FIGHT WITH BENET KILLIGREW, AND OUR FLIGHT ACROSS THE MOORS.

"STOP!" I cried as the party came up. Immediately the women checked their horses, but the man seemed as though he would ride on, heedless of me. When he saw that his companions obeyed my bidding, however, he wheeled around savagely.

"Who are you, my man?" he cried. It was Benet Killigrew who spoke. Evidently the women had carefully obeyed my bidding.

"Thank you, Killigrew, for carrying out my plans," I said. "Now you can ride back to your father and the priest, and tell them what a fool you have been."

I heard him growl an oath which I will not here set down.

"What want you?" he cried.

"I could have shot you easily," I said, "but that is not my way. Go back now, I will take care of the lady."

He saw the trap into which he had fallen, but he was not a man to give up easily.

"Ha!" he laughed, "after all, I'm glad of this. You thought I should play into your hands, but, by Heaven, you play into mine!"

He leaped from his horse as he spoke, and I believe that for the moment in his eagerness to fight he had forgotten why he was there.

Bidding Chestnut stand still, I placed myself on guard while Benet drew his sword.

"I like not fighting before women," he cried; "they faint at the sight of blood, but, by Cormoran, I love you, Trevanion! We'll fight for the maid, and the best man shall have her."

"Stop a minute," I said. "This is Mistress Nancy Molesworth, is it not?"

"Yes,"—it was the maid herself who spoke.

"And you do not wish to go with this man Benet Killigrew?"

"No, no. I will go no further with him now. I only came here thus at your bidding!"

"Did you?" growled Benet, "but you will go further with me. Trevanion, you are over confident, my man. Because you threw me by a trick I had not practised, you ventured on this scheme? I love you for it, but you are a dead man, Trevanion"; and he gave a laugh of wild joy.

For the moment I repented I had not wounded him unawares and taken away the maid without his knowing who had done it, but only for a moment. It is but a coward's device to hurt an unprepared man. Besides, although Benet Killigrew was a wild rake, and ill-fitted to be the husband of such a maid as Nancy Molesworth, he was a brave man, and loved a fight, and as such I respected him.

Without waiting he attacked me hotly; all the same I saw he was wary, and was not weakened

by over-confidence, as he was when we wrestled. His eyes continued to gleam with a fierce joy, and he laughed like a man well pleased.

"You thought to beat Benet Killigrew," he cried, "you thought to use him as a tool, eh?"

For full three minutes we fought without either gaining advantage, and I realized how much depended on the skill and strength of my right arm. I saw too that Benet meant to kill me; every thrust he made meant death had I not been successful in parrying them. Never before had I fought with such a man; never before had I seen such a gleam of joy, a joy that was devilish, as I saw in Benet Killigrew's eyes.

I had no chance of noticing the two women, for Benet pressed me sorely. I fancied I heard some slight screams, but of these I recked nothing. A woman always cries out at a man's blows. For the first few minutes I acted on the defensive. I was anxious to test my antagonist, before seeking to disable him, for this was all I wanted to do.

Presently, therefore I prepared myself for a method of attack of which I fancied Killigrew would be ignorant, but in making it I placed myself at a disadvantage, for my heel caught on a big stone which lay in the road, and I was thrown off my guard. He was not slow in making use of this, as may be imagined, and I doubt much if I could have saved myself, for I stumbled back a couple of paces, and as I stumbled I saw his sword arm raised. Before he could strike, however, his arm was caught from behind, and in a second I was my own man again.

He gave a savage oath, and furiously threw aside the one who had kept him from taking advantage of my mishap.

In a second I saw that it was Mistress Nancy Molesworth who had come to my aid, and while I felt ashamed that I needed to be helped by a maid, the incident in the battle nerved my arm.

"Come on, Benet Killigrew," I said, "that stone shall not serve you again."

"Bah, you were at my mercy," he cried, "but you were saved by the maid Nancy. Well, the best man shall have her!"

After that no further word was spoken, for we fell to again, and each of us fought like grim death. And now Benet fought not so much for the joy of fighting, as for the sake of claiming the maid who had held his hand, and for revenge on me. I too fought in deadly earnest, for now that the maid had rendered me such signal service I felt more than ever desirous of ridding her from the power of the Killigrews, and perhaps I desired to show her even at that moment that I was a better man than my opponent. Besides, I knew that Otho Killigrew and his brothers might be upon me at any moment, so that whatever was done must be done quickly. With this in my mind I became less cautious, being anxious to finish the business, and Benet, noting this, thought, I expect, that my guard was becoming weak; whereupon, imagining I was yielding ground, he rushed on me with so little care that he spitted himself on my sword, while his weapon fell from his hand.

Precious though every moment was, I undid his

doublet and examined the wound I had made. The blood came freely, but I did not think it was mortal. For this I was glad, because I wished not to have his life resting on me.

"You have got the maid, Trevanion," he gasped, "but I shall not die. Some time we shall fight again," and with that he fell into a swoon.

"We are followed!"

It was the maid Nancy who spoke, and instantly I heard the sound of horses.

"Mount!" I cried quickly, and then I saw that the serving-maid had not alighted from her horse. Whistling to Chestnut that he might come to me, I turned to help Mistress Nancy to get on her horse; but she would have nought to do with me. Instead she led her steed to a high stone, and without my aid sat in her saddle. I jumped on Chestnut's back, therefore, and galloped southward, with the two women close to me.

Both of them rode well. The maid Nancy sat her horse gracefully, as every well-born woman should, while Amelia Lanteglos rode carelessly and easily, as is common among country wenches who make a practice of riding horses barebacked. For a couple of miles neither spoke; we rode hard as was natural, but at the end of that time I drew my rein for a moment. I was anxious to listen whether we were followed. The women, however, rode forward.

"Stop!" I said.

"For why?" It was Mistress Nancy who spoke.

"I wish to listen whether the Killigrews are

riding behind us, or whether they have stopped with Benet."

Upon this they obeyed my behest, I thought unwillingly. I listened for a few moments, but no sound reached me.

"They must be staying awhile with Benet," I said aloud.

"Yes, but they will follow us. Let us forward!"

"Whither?" I asked, for her tones nettled me. She spoke as though I were a servant.

"There is but one place," she replied sharply. "Your promise was to take me to Polperro."

"And when you get there?" I asked.

"Your work will be done then, sir."

"But the Killigrews will follow you to Polperro."

"I have friends there who will protect me. Let us waste no more time."

We rode forward without another word, although, to tell the truth, her discourteous mode of speech cooled my ardour. Apparently she did not remember that I had been scheming and fighting for her liberty. Evidently I was no more to her than a lad who might open a gate through which she might enter into liberty. What became of me in opening the gate, she cared not. This ill-agreed with my nature, although, when I remembered my promise to Peter Trevisa, I felt tongue-tied. The truth was, I wot not what to do. My bargain with Trevisa hung like a millstone around my neck, and the fact that I could not altogether shake off the thought that I meant to

take the maid to Treviscoe made me ashamed to speak to her.

I do not pretend to be a hero such as story-tellers rave about, and I must confess that the thought of having Trevanion under easy circumstances became hourly more dear to me. All the same I wanted to act worthily of my name, and the thought of the helplessness of the women who rode near me made me anxious for their safety.

"We must ride through Wadebridge," I said at length.

"Why?"

"Because of the river."

"Very well."

After that we lapsed into silence again. A mile or two further on I sought to draw her into a conversation, but in vain. Evidently she had accepted my escort as the one means of escaping from the Killigrews, but she loved me no more than she trusted them. I was as distasteful to her as they were, and she would have scorned my help had any other means presented themselves. I could see too that she did not trust me, and that if I acted contrary to her wishes she would leave me. Now that she had gained her liberty she felt confident of her own strength and ingenuity. The fact that no sound of the Killigrews followed us gave her assurance, and in her ignorance of what might happen she fancied herself well out of harm's way. For myself she was sure I must have some purpose of my own to serve, and it was for her to use me in so far as I could be of

any value to her, taking precautions all the time, however, that I did not betray her.

This was how the matter appealed to me, and every mile of the journey confirmed my belief. Moreover I felt she was just, for although my heart revolted at the thought of taking her to Treviscoe, I knew I had not given up hopes of getting back Trevanion.

All this made me a sorry companion, and made me hang my head as I rode along.

"We must decide what road we take after we reach Wadebridge," I said as we drew near the little port.

"How? why?" she asked.

"There be several roads," I replied. "The nearest way to Polperro will be to ride through Egloshayle, and thence, on to Bodmin, but that is also the road the Killigrews will most likely take in their search after you."

"But they are not following."

"Doubtless they stopped when they came to Benet, but if I know Otho he will not give up easily."

"And the other roads?"

"There is one across the moors by which we can get to a place called St. Blazey; from thence it is but a few miles to Polperro."

"And which do you advise?"

"I had better not advise," I replied proudly. "The road to Bodmin is good, although it hath but an ill name, because of the footpads who infest it. The one across the moors is rough and not so easily followed. It would be easy to get lost there in the dark."

"And think you the Killigrews would overtake us if we went the Bodmin road?"

"They could ride faster than we."

"And they would take me back?"

"I can fight one, I cannot fight many. Besides, when one is not trusted, it is but little he can do."

She looked at me keenly.

"Advise me," she said presently.

"There will be no sound of horses' hoofs across the moors," I said. "That fact cuts two ways, but it would give us the advantage at the start."

"We will go across the moors," she said in a more friendly way, although her voice was anxious, as indeed it might well be.

Accordingly we rode across the bridge which leads into the little town of Wadebridge, and then went some distance on the Padstow road, until we came to a little lane which led to the moors. We had gone perhaps a mile across a dreary tract of land, when she spoke again.

"There be no bogs, no dangerous places here?" she asked.

"I never heard of any," I replied.

"And you think we are away from danger?"

"I think we are less likely to be followed than if we had taken the main way. In my opinion it would be best for us to find some place of rest as soon as daylight comes."

"Why?"

"We shall not be able to travel rapidly in the dark, and, think as we may, but the Killigrews will be scouring the whole countryside, and that right quickly."

"But can we not hurry on to Polperro?"

"It is several hours' ride from here. In an hour or so it will be daylight. They will then be able to track our horses. Even if they fail to track us in that way, they will have men placed near John Polperro's house."

"Why did you not tell me this earlier?"

"You would not listen to me."

"What would you do now then?"

"I think it would be best to find a farm-house. If we could hap on a convenient one it would be best to rest there two or three days. This done, I might reconnoitre Polperro's place, and perchance prepare him for your coming."

She turned her head towards me, but the sky was overcast and the light was dim. She could barely see my face, neither could I see hers. Then I remembered that I had never seen the maid in broad daylight, and for the first time I felt the strangeness of my position. I was alone on a wide stretch of moors with a lady and her serving-woman. We were in all probability pursued by those who had the legal right to govern the lady's actions. She desired to go to a place of safety, while it was to my interest to take her to Peter Trevisa. All this I knew before, but until then I did not realize what it meant.

"Will it be safe to go to a farm-house?" she said at length.

"The country people are very hospitable," I replied; "besides we can pay them liberally."

Presently the dark outline of a square church tower appeared against the dark sky.

"What is that?" she asked.

"It is St. Wenn Church tower," I replied. "We should have got farther than this, but we have been obliged to come very slowly across the moors. I think the road will soon be better now."

"It will soon be daylight, you say. Will you look out for some place where we can stay."

She spoke despondingly. Doubtless she was lonely, and perhaps she felt the real difficulties of the situation. She spoke no further to me, however, but fell back with her serving-maid, leaving me to my thoughts.

Presently I saw a gray streak in the eastern sky, and then looking back I saw a party of horsemen.

"Ride faster!" I cried out. "We are followed."

"By whom?"

"Look back," I replied.

She obeyed me, and I saw by the look in her eyes that she came to the same conclusion as I.

"What can we do?" she cried.

In truth I knew not how to answer her. I had discovered enough of the Killigrews to know they would not be easily beaten. I was sure too they would seek to be revenged on me, while the maid Nancy would be wholly in their power, if I were unable to protect her. To make matters worse, too, I saw that her horse was lame. It might be that only a stone had become wedged in the hollow of his hoof, but on the other hand it might be more serious. Daylight would soon be upon us,

and our followers, if they were the Killigrews, would find us easily.

"In truth, I cannot tell you just yet," I said. "Let us ride on."

It was but comfortless words I could speak, but she made no complaining answer. We descended into a little hollow from which we could n t see our pursuers, but we were none the less free from danger. A few minutes later we climbed the hill on the other side, I vainly racking my brain for some feasible plan. All the time the light grew brighter, but I looked not towards her. Truth to tell, I was ashamed. When we reached the summit of the hill, while we were hidden from those behind, the country southward was exposed to our view. My heart gave a great leap, for what I saw set me thinking rapidly.

Before me, about two miles away, rose a great rock. It was perhaps thirty feet high, while nearly at the summit I could see what seemed like masonry. A doorway was fashioned, just as though some one had used the place as a refuge.

"That," I thought, "is Roche Rock!"

No sooner had the fancy flashed through my brain, than I remembered Anthony, the tale-teller. I called to mind what he had said about escaping to a high rock amidst the wild waste of moors. I minded the scrap of paper lying at my chamber door, on which was written the word *ROCHE*.

As I said, the light was increasing, although the sun had not yet risen. I looked back; we were still hidden from our pursuers.

"Mistress Nancy!" I cried, "yonder is one place of refuge."

"Yonder rock! How?"

"I cannot explain now. Come, let us ride more quickly. I feel sure there is safety!"

For the first time since the daylight came I looked at her face. True, she had suffered much excitement, fear, and fatigue through the night, but at that moment the light of hope shone in her eyes. Yes, she was a beauteous maid, and I wondered not that so many men loved her. I had no feeling of the sort myself,—at the same time her many fears appealed to my pity, and, forgetful of my promises, I swore to myself that I would take her to a place of safety.

"Let us not spare horseflesh!" I cried. "It is but a couple of miles."

I urged her horse forward, but it was no use. The animal was badly lamed, and it became more painful for him to hobble at every step he took.

"It cannot be helped," I cried; "my Chestnut can carry us both easily. There, place your foot on mine, and jump in front of me!"

The maid hesitated as though the thought were unpleasant, but she overcame her feelings, and did as I bid her, I feeling more than ever determined to stand by her loyally. Past thirty as I was, the unaccustomed experience of a maid sitting near me made my blood tingle, as after speaking to Chestnut we rode through Roche church town. No one was astir; indeed, the whole village seemed as much unconscious as the

dead who lay near the old parish church. Roche contained only a few houses, and we quickly passed through it: then turning to the left we hurried forward towards the rock, which stood amidst a number of small rocks on the lone moor.

The serving-maid, Amelia Lanteglos, kept close to me, neither did she make any complaint. Indeed throughout the whole journey she had kept cheerful, and as far as lay in her power had ministered to her mistress.

Arrived at the rock, I looked around me. There were no signs of pursuers; indeed all was silent as death, save for the sound of our panting horses. I looked up towards the masonry at the summit of the rock, which looked like a chapel, and eagerly sought for some signs of life. In my eagerness to get there, I had scarcely thought of the improbability of any one taking up abode at such a place. I had obeyed the impulse of the moment, without recking its wisdom. Meanwhile Mistress Nancy stood by Chestnut's head looking at me doubtfully.

"Uncle Anthony," I said; and as if some one rose from the dead, I heard sounds which seemed to come from the heart of the great rock, and a minute later I saw Uncle Anthony's face appear at a small window.

"Uncle Anthony," I repeated, "I want your protection. There are helpless women here who are fleeing from danger."

His eyes rested on me for barely a second, then he turned to the maid Nancy.

"The shadow of a great rock in a weary land," he said softly. "Come, my lamb."

A few minutes later he had descended to the base of the rock. "Come, my lamb," he said again.

With an agility of which I should not have thought him capable, he climbed up the steep side of his resting-place, carefully helping Mistress Nancy all the time, until he came to a doorway seemingly hewn out of the rock; having told her to enter, he rendered a similar service to Amelia Lanteglos, while I stood and watched him like one dazed.

CHAPTER XII.

ROCHE ROCK.

"Come, Roger Trevanion," he said presently, "yet there is room."

"The horses?" I queried.

"Ah yes," he said, quickly coming to me. "I can make no provision for them."

I gave a gesture of impatience.

"You have a story to tell me, Roger Trevanion," he said, "and it is well it should be told quickly. But there is plenty of grass on the moors, and your horse obeys you like a Christian. Take off the saddle, and tell it to go yonder out of sight, and the other will follow."

I was not long in doing his bidding. I pulled off the head-gearing and saddles from both the animals, and then I told Chestnut what I wanted

him to do. I am sure he understood me perfectly, for he trotted some distance across the moors, the other nag following as Uncle Anthony had said.

"There be many horses grazing on these moors," said the old man, as though he divined the thoughts in my mind, "so yours will attract no notice."

I looked around me again, and then up at the vast mass of bluish schorl rock on which the lonely chapel was built.

"A wise man doth mount the high rock, and rest in peace," he said, repeating the very words he had used when I had seen him at Endellion, only now he spoke like a man of learning and not in the Cornish vernacular as he had spoken then. "Happy are they who in trouble seek the shelter of the wise man's high place."

"I remember," I replied, "that is why I came."

"You will not be troubled," he said, "it hath a bad name. Spirits of the dead are said to haunt this moor."

"The Killigrews fear not man nor devil, especially Otho," I replied.

"Come, you have much to tell me," was his answer. "At present no man is in sight, but come. The lady Nancy and her serving-maid will want food and rest, and there is trouble in your eyes."

I followed him as he climbed towards the summit of his hiding-place, but I found it a difficult task, for it was almost perpendicular; the foot-places were but narrow, too, and the holding-places few. But Uncle Anthony went easily, like

one who had ascended and descended many times, as indeed he had.

I discovered that the building in which the old man lived was divided into two apartments. The one he had used for domestic purposes, and the other for prayer and meditation. The latter was the one known at St. Michael's Chapel.

"It is but little I can offer," remarked he; "but such as I have give I unto thee. Come, we will go where the lady and her serving-maid resteth."

As I entered the strange hiding-place, Mistress Nancy looked eagerly towards me as if expecting danger, but I quickly dispelled her fears, and a few minutes later we were all eating such fare as Uncle Anthony had been able to provide. Little was said during the meal; all of us were apprehensive of danger, and, when we had eaten, the old man led me into the chapel.

"I can guess much," he said, "perchance you will wish to tell me more."

I hesitated, for in truth I wot not how much to tell. I knew next to nothing of the story-teller, who led such a strange existence. Who was the man who masqueraded one day as a traveling droll, and the next as hermit? Moreover, how came he to know my name? That he was a man possessed of great powers of penetration was easily to be seen, and I felt almost afraid as he fixed his keen gray eyes upon me.

I looked from the window and saw three horsemen coming along the road we had travelled, and pointed towards them.

"The Killigrews," I said.

"Yes, but they will not come here." He spoke with certainty, and I could not help believing that he told the truth.

"Who are you, Uncle Anthony?" I asked.

"A friend of the oppressed, and one who never forgets a kindness," he replied.

"Have you powers more than is ordinarily possessed by men?"

"There be those who have eyes, and see, and there be those who have eyes and see not. I see."

"How know you what my name is?"

He smiled. "Is the name of Trevanion an obscure one? Are the features of the Trevanions unknown? Cornwall is not a large county, and there be those who know it well."

"But you knew not when we entered Endellion together."

"There be those who, in hours of quiet thought, recall impressions once made. There be those who can search the human heart, and read the mind."

"Such powers belong only to the God who made us," I replied.

"There be those to whom God speaks. Those who dream dreams and see visions."

I looked at him questioningly, but I could read nothing in his face; when I looked into his eyes my own fell, even as the hands of a feeble swordsman fall before those of his master.

"If you know all, what need is there for me to tell you?" I stammered.

"No man knows all," he replied. "But I have seen the face of the Lady Nancy Molesworth. I have looked into her soul and seen its weariness and sorrow. I know the hopes of the Killigrews. I looked into your heart, and knew that your life was linked unto hers. I wrote the word 'Roche' on that piece of paper, and have waited for your coming."

"And beyond that?"

"Beyond that, nothing certain."

I debated with myself whether I should tell him everything, but I was afraid and held my peace.

"Have you naught to tell me, Roger Trevanion?" he said presently.

"I had heard of the maid's imprisonment at Endellion," I replied, "and I determined to set her at liberty." Then I described to him what had happened as I have here written it down.

"But what is the end to be?"

"She wishes to be taken to the house of John Polperro."

"And you will take her there?"

I was silent, for I remembered the promise I had made to Peter Trevisa.

Again he scanned my features closely. "Love you this maid?" he asked sternly.

"I love no maid!" I replied scornfully.

"Then what is your purpose? Oh, I know your history, Roger Trevanion. I know that for years you have taken no woman to your heart. I know that you have lived in poverty for years. Would you wed her for her possessions?"

"I would wed no woman for her possessions," I replied angrily. "Women are naught to me."

"So I have been told. Then do you help her from pure chivalry? Is it your purpose to take her to the place she desires to go. Have you faced imprisonment and death without thought of reward?"

"What is that to you?" I asked.

"This," he replied. "You need my help, and I must be assured that you mean all that a gentleman should mean before I extend it further."

"Gentleman!" I cried, "what know you of the feelings of a gentleman? You a droll, a travelling tale-teller!"

This I said with a purpose, for I desired to see further into the heart of the man. I saw too that I had not spoken in vain. His eyes flashed angrily, and he placed his hand on his left hip as though he carried a sword there.

"As good a gentleman as you," he cried angrily, and for the moment he had lost control over himself. "I have a name as good as yours, my family—" he stopped, feeling doubtless that he had been betrayed into saying more than he intended.

"If you are a gentleman," I replied, "you will know that a man does not tell all that is in his heart to every passing stranger. You evidently have your secret, you do not tell it to me."

"True," he replied quietly. "I spoke hastily, Roger Trevanion. I know too that the word of a Trevanion is to be trusted, thus I will not question it." Then he waited for some time in

silence, his eyes occasionally scanning the wild moors around, and again resting upon me.

"I am waiting," he said presently.

"For what?"

"Your word."

"What word?"

"The word that your motives are honourable. That you seek only to carry out the maid's wishes. That you will take her to the house of John Polperro, and then, if she wishes, leave her as a gentleman should."

I did not answer. I could not.

"I wait," he said presently.

"I am not accustomed to pledge my word and tell my purposes to strangers," I replied. "I must consider."

"And I must consider," he retorted.

"What?"

"Whether I tell the lady Nancy not to trust you. Whether I shall send word to the Killigrews telling of your whereabouts, or throw you on the rocks beneath us!"

I laughed in his face, and yet as I looked at his lean sinewy body, and saw the flash of his eyes, my laughter died on my lips. I felt sure that he could not easily carry out his threat, but I saw I should be a fool if I made him my enemy.

"It will not be well for us to be at cross purposes," I said presently. "Believe me, I would not do the maid an ill turn."

"And methinks I spoke hastily, foolishly," he replied, "for in truth I am no fighter. I forgot

that I am an old man, that my sinews are soft and my bones stiff."

"Besides," I suggested, "the maid Nancy hath a will of her own. She is not easily forced."

"Yes, yes," he replied eagerly, "we must speak with her. Nothing must be done hastily. As you said some time ago, the Killigrews will be watching around Polperro's house, and she must not go there yet. No, no!"

He spoke, I thought, rather to himself than to me, and I wondered what was in his mind.

"The Killigrews will be scouring the countryside," he went on, "but it will be many hours before they think of Roche Rock. Of that I will swear. She is safe yet, but she cannot stay here long. It would neither be seemly nor right, and Uncle Anthony hath many hiding-places—many."

"We will have to stay here till nightfall," I said, as though he still trusted in me.

"Yes," he replied, "and as soon as she hath rested we will speak together. You feel weary perchance. Lie down on this pallet and rest."

"No, I cannot rest; my mind is filled with many things," was my answer. "I will stay here and watch"; and indeed I felt no weariness.

Uncle Anthony left the chapel, but soon returned. "The lady Nancy is asleep," he remarked, "and the serving-maid sits by her watching."

Some hours passed, but nothing of importance happened. I had a further conversation with Uncle Anthony, but I could not find out who he was, or why he chose such a strange mode of ex-

istence; but presently he came to me, saying that he had prepared food for us, after which it would be well if we talked together.

During the meal a silence fell upon us, neither did Mistress Nancy once look at me in the face. But my eyes constantly rested upon her. She was evidently very anxious, and the journey through the night had told upon her. Nevertheless I was more and more impressed by the thought of her beauty. And yet, as I thought, there was but little tenderness in her beauty. Her face was set, almost rigid, a look of determination constantly revealed itself, and she seemed to be thinking deeply.

"The Killigrews are in the neighbourhood," said Uncle Anthony when the simple meal had been eaten. "They will know that you are near. They will have seen the lame horse you left on the road."

"But how will they know I have not gone on?" This she said like one impatient.

"They be keen men these Killigrews, and hard riders. They were only a few miles behind. If you had continued on horseback they would have seen you; this they will be sure to know."

"It will be well to start immediately after dark," I suggested. "We must take a circuitous route. I know of a safe hiding-place in the west of the county. Once there it will be easy to find out whether it will be safe for you to go to Polperro's home."

Her eyes flashed angrily into mine, but she gave no answer. I felt her behaviour to be a

poor reward for the service I had rendered, and a bitter feeling came into my heart. Then I thought of what my suggestion meant, and my eyes dropped. Still I went on, unheeding the cool reception she gave to my words.

"I am sure you will be safe in the place I have in my mind," I said, "it is in the neighbourhood where the Killigrews dare not come. For Hugh Boscawen lives close by, and he has armed many men to protect the King against the Pretender. If the Killigrews came there methinks it would go ill with them. At present I am afraid it would be unsafe for you to seek John Polperro's aid."

"Would you place me under Hugh Boscawen's care?" she asked.

"That would scarcely be wise," I replied stammeringly.

"With whom would you place me then?"

"I know an old squire who lives near him," I replied. "He would do anything for me."

She lifted her eyes to my face, and looked steadily at me.

"What is his name?" she asked.

I tried to utter Peter Trevisa's name, but I could not. Again she put a weight upon my tongue, just as when I stood close to her on the top of Endellion House. I mumbled some words indistinctly, and cursed myself for being such a fool. Why could I not brazen out the matter as I had intended? Was I to be again beaten by this chit of a girl?

She was silent for a few seconds; then she spoke again.

"Master Penryn, or whatever your name may be," she said, still keeping her eyes steadily upon me, "will you tell me why you have sought to help me away from the Killigrews?"

"Have not my actions told you?" I stammered.

"Told me what?"

"That I desire to be a friend to you."

"I have tried to believe so," was her answer. "I have tried to trust you, but I cannot. If you would be my friend, tell me plainly what led you to Endellion. Tell me why you kept silence when I asked you the other night. I need a friend—sadly. I am hedged around by those who seek to do me ill. But I cannot trust a man who by every action betrays an evil purpose."

"Methinks you trusted me to fight Benet Killigrew," I retorted. "You trusted me to bring you so far. Have I betrayed that trust?"

"I will be frank with you," was her answer. "When I heard of your answers to Otho, when I was told that you preferred imprisonment rather than promise him that you would not seek to set me at liberty, I doubted myself. I thought I had been unjust to you. I wrote and told you so. When I heard of your escape through mastering Benet, and thought of what it meant, I doubted myself more still. As you know, I was in sore straits, and when I heard of what my maid told me, I could not believe that a gentleman would prove false to a defenceless maid. Thus I risked everything in my desire for freedom, and because I was trying to believe in you. I believed in you as you fought Benet; but when we were alone

together I shrunk from you in spite of myself. I seemed to see the mask that you wore. Perchance I appear ungrateful, for indeed, you have so far behaved as a man of honour should, but every minute my heart is telling me that you are a traitor, and that you have purposes of your own of which you dare not speak."

As she spoke, it seemed as though my heart were laid bare to her gaze. I saw myself a miserable spy, a traitor to the name I bore. I cursed myself for having aught to do with the maid who was so wise, and wished that I had spurned Peter Trevisa's overtures. Moreover anger burnt in my heart against her, and my tongue was unloosed. Unmindful of consequence I answered her in wrath.

"You call me a traitor," I cried, "because I do not flatter and favour; because I do not make love to you like Otho Killigrew or his brother Benet. You trust John Polperro rather than me, because he comes with honeyed words telling of a love which perchance he doth not feel. Benet Killigrew would take you from Endellion because he would marry you and your estates. Otho got a priest to come there with the same end in view. Polperro is smooth-spoken, but would he render Nancy Molesworth the service he promises if Restormel did not exist? Well, I come to you with no honeyed words. I do not tell you that I love you, for in truth I do not. I love no woman, and will end my life without taking a wife. But am I a traitor because of that? You accuse me of not telling you all that is in my mind. Cannot a

man have an honourable secret? May I not have honourable purposes and yet not be able to divulge them? This accusation seems a poor reward to a man who hath endangered both liberty and life to bring you so far."

I saw that my answer had its effect. Her lips quivered and her eyes became softer.

"I am not forgetful of your services, and perchance I am unkind, but in all my life my heart hath never told me wrong," she said. "All the same I will trust you if you will answer me one fair question. If you had a sister, a dear one, in such dire extremity as I am, would you have her done by as you have it in your heart to do by me?"

Again I was tongue-tied, and my eyes fell before hers. I thought of her as being the wife of young Peter Trevisa, I thought of the net which the two Trevisas were probably trying to weave around her just then, and I stood dumb, like a boy caught in the act of stealing.

The maid gave a sigh, and then as I lifted my eyes to hers again I saw a look of loathing and disgust on her face.

"I have heard of you as having two names," she said, and I detected scorn in her tones. "You have called yourself Penryn, and I have heard that you are a Trevanion. They are both honourable. But I dare not trust you, because you are unworthy of either. I would thank you if I could for bringing me here, but I cannot, for there is that in your mind which means worse to me than being the wife of a Killigrew."

"I am dismissed then?" I cried in a rage—"dismissed like a disgraced servant. Well, let it be so."

"Yes," she cried, "I know you now, and I would rather trust to the mercies of the Killigrews than to one who, under the guise of friendship, would use the one who sought his help in order to carry out some base purpose of his own."

With these words, she left the little room, and went into the chapel where I had spent most of the morning with Uncle Anthony. The maid had maddened me now. I felt no sympathy with her. Hitherto my mind and heart had been divided. Sometimes I had altogether made up my mind to place her under the protection of John Polperro, and never had I fully decided to take her to Peter Trevisa's. Indeed, I believe that had she wept and prayed like some maidens would have done, aye, had she appealed to my honour as a gentleman, I should at all hazards have been led by her will. But now all was different. She had defied me, insulted me. She had refused to have aught further to do with me. She preferred being taken back to Endellion, to being left under my escort.

"Very well, my proud lady," I thought, "but you have not done with me yet. You *shall* go to Peter Trevisa's, and neither the Killigrews, John Polperro, nor Uncle Anthony shall prevent me from taking you."

And this I determined because I was mad, and because, in spite of the fact that her accusation was partly just, her words rankled in my heart.

But I knew that I must be wary. I knew that Uncle Anthony was watching me closely, so I feigned to take my dismissal kindly.

"Be it so," I laughed; "I am always glad to be rid of women. I will leave you shortly, Uncle Anthony, but this bout with the maid hath tired me more than wrestling, and methinks I will rest awhile." This I said because I wanted an excuse for staying on the rock.

"That is well," said Uncle Anthony kindly. "We must not be hard on the maid; perchance she will think better of you presently. I will go and fetch the pallet from the chapel."

"And, Uncle Anthony," I said with a laugh, "hermit though you are, you must surely have a bottle of wine somewhere."

"Think you so?" replied the old man. "Well, I will see."

He shortly returned with wine, which I drank. After which I lay down, not thinking of going to sleep, but rather to wait and watch. Presently, however, a drowsy feeling came over me, which I felt no inclination to resist, and before long I became unconscious.

When I awoke, it was dark. I listened, but could hear no sound. I went into the chapel, and found it empty; I called aloud, but got no reply. Then I realized what had happened. While I had been asleep Uncle Anthony had escaped with the maid, and both were doubtless many miles away.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WISDOM OF GOSSIPING WITH AN INNKEEPER.

I HAD been beaten. I knew it, and the fact maddened me. The old hermit and the maid had divined the thoughts in my mind. In all probability the wine I had drunk was drugged. Thus while I was asleep, they had gone away, leaving me alone on the lonely rock. Which way had they gone? I knew not. They in the silence of the night had left me, leaving me in entire ignorance.

I looked from the chapel window, and saw a vast tract of country around me, for the moon had risen high in the heavens; then, yielding to the impulse of the moment, I climbed to the highest peak on the great mass of stone. From this point I could see far in all directions, but no signs of life were visible. I could see Roche church tower among the trees, I could see the little village near. For the rest, nothing was in sight save vast stretches of moorland. Here and there was a cultivated field, but mostly the country-side was barren and forsaken.

I listened, but all was silent. The night was very calm, save for a sighing wind which as it entered a valley near made a low moaning sound. For a moment a superstitious dread laid hold on me. I remembered the story I had been told years before. It was said that the last heir of the Tregarrick family, on whose lands the rock stood,

became weary of life, built the chapel in which old Anthony had taken up his abode, and called it St. Michael's Chapel. Here he lived many years and died in sorrow. Rumour also had it that Tregeagle's spirit, that ogre of Cornish childhood, haunted the rock and the moors, and often breathed forth his sorrow in sighs and moans. But I mastered my fears by an effort. I remembered how I had been beaten, and anger drove all other feelings away. The last heir of the Tregarricks and the Spirit of Tregeagle was nothing to me, living or dead.

I looked at my watch, and by the light of the moon discovered that it was midnight. I had, therefore, been asleep for ten hours. Darkness came on about six o'clock, so that in all probability they had left me long hours before. I racked my brains sorely in order to divine the direction they had taken, but without avail. Then I remembered that they must need horses, and wondered how they managed. I felt sure, however, that Uncle Anthony would be too full of devices to remain long in difficulty about horseflesh. As he had said, many horses grazed among the moors; they were of no great value, but doubtless he could obtain a couple that would serve his purpose. One they had already, on which Amelia Lanteglos had ridden, a useful animal which Benet Killigrew had taken from his father's stables. This set me thinking again, and without more ado I cautiously crept down to the moors. Giving a long shrill whistle which I had taught Chestnut to obey, I awaited results. In a few seconds I

heard the sound of horse's hoofs; then in a short space of time the animal I had learnt to love came up to me, and with a whinny of gladness began to lick my hand.

"Ah, Chestnut, old boy," I laughed, "at any rate they could not steal you from me. Which way are they gone, my lad?"

As though he understood me, he turned his head southward.

"Well, Chestnut," I said, "I want to find them badly. You know which way they went. I leave everything to you."

Whereupon, I went to the hollow place under the rock into which I had thrown my saddle, and to my delight I found that Uncle Anthony had left both saddle and bridle untouched. A few seconds later I was on Chestnut's back.

"Follow them, Chestnut," I said; "I leave everything to you," and as though he understood me, he carefully picked his way among the rocks till he reached the highway, then without hesitation went westward towards the church. Presently we came to some cross-ways, where he hesitated, but only for a second. Putting his nose to the ground he sniffed uneasily around and then started on a brisk trot southward.

When I had gone perhaps three miles, all my hopes had departed. If the truth must be told, too, I felt more and more like giving up what seemed a useless quest. In spite of Chestnut choosing the southward road in preference to any other, I was very probably riding away from the maid Nancy and her companions, and even if

I were not, what should I gain by following them?

"Let her go," I cried bitterly. "It has been an ill game I have been playing—an ill game. Let Uncle Anthony take her whither he will."

But this feeling did not long possess me. For the first time since I had seen the maid, the promise I had made to Peter Trevisa became really binding; moreover, I hated the thought of being beaten. If I gave up at this point, I should never cease to reproach myself with being outwitted by a girl, and it was not my nature to accept defeat easily. Besides, I was curious to see what the end of the business would be. In spite of myself I was interested in the maid. I admired her coolness and her far-sightedness. Even though I was angry with her for calling me a traitor, her very feeling of distrust of me made me sure she was no ordinary schoolgirl. Nay, I carried my conclusions further. The intuition that warned her against deceit, the power by which she made me stammer like a boy, and hang my head like a thief, convinced me that here was a pure-hearted maid, and one who might be trusted.

A little later I came to St. Denis, but, as Chestnut showed no inclination to halt, I rode straight on. I did not guide him in the least, and although I felt myself foolish in allowing him to take the St. Stephen's road, I laid no weight on the bridle rein.

While passing through a little hamlet called Trethosa, the morning began to dawn, and by the time I had reached St. Stephen's it was broad

daylight. I found a little inn in the village close by the churchyard gates, called the King's Arms. Here, in spite of the fact that Chestnut seemed as if he would go on, I stopped. The truth was, I felt hungry and faint, and I knew that my horse would be all the better for a gallon or two of oats and a good grooming. The landlord's name I discovered to be Bill Best, and I found him very communicative, which is not a common trait among Cornishmen. He told me his history with great freedom, also that of his wife. He related to me the circumstances of his courtship, and mentioned the amount of his wife's dowry.

"'Tis a grand thing to have a good wife," I remarked.

"'Tes, and ted'n," was his reply.

I asked him to explain.

"Well I be a man that do like my slaip, I be. When I caan't slaip ov a night, I be oal dazey droo the day. Why now I be as dazey as can be. Ordnarly I be a very cute man, avin a oncommon amount of sense. Ax our passon. Why, 'ee'll tell 'ee that as a boy I cud leck off catechism like bread'n trycle. But since I've bin married I caan't slaip."

"Why, does your wife keep you awake?"

"No, ted'n that. Tes the cheldern. But my Betsey cud slaip through a earthquake, and zo tes, that all droo the night there's a passel of cheldern squallin, keepin' me wake. Laast night, now, I 'ardly slaiped for the night."

"Indeed," I replied, "and was it your children last night?"

"Paartly," he replied, "paartly the cheldern, and paartly summin else. Be you a gover'ment man?"

"No."

"Nothin' toal of a passon nuther, I spects?"

"No, why?"

"Well now I'll tell 'ee. But law, ere be your 'am rashers and eggs. Haive to em now. They rashers ded cum from a pig thirty-score wight, the beggest in this parish. Look top the graavy too; they'll make yore uzzle like a trumpet fer sweetness. Ait em and I'll tell 'ee while you be feedin'. But law, ther's nuff fer boath ov us, I can allays craake better wen I'm aitin'."

Accordingly he sat down by my side and helped himself liberally.

"Well, naow, as I woz a-zayin'," he continued, "I ded'n go to bed till laate laast night. I was avin a bit of tolk weth the 'ow'll Martin ovver to Kernick. Do you know Martin?"

"No."

"Doan't 'ee fer sure, then? He's a purty booy, 'ee es. Years agone 'ee used to stail sheep in a coffin. Stoal scores an scores that way. Ave 'ee 'eerd ow 'ee nacked ovver the exciseman, then?"

"No."

"Ded'n 'ee? law, that wos a purty taale, that wos. 'Twud maake 'ee scat yer zides weth laffin. But there, you genlemen waan't care to do that. Wot wos us talkin' bout, then?"

"You said you couldn't sleep last night."

"To be zure I ded. I'll tell 'ee. Old Martin

do do a bit ov smugglin', and do dail weth the smugglers, and as you be'ant a gover'ment man I may tell 'ee that he brought me a vew ankers of things laast night laate. He ded'n laive me till after twelve o'clock. Well, when 'ee wos gone off I went to bed, and wos just going off to slaip when our Tryphena beginned a squall. That zet off Casteena, and Casteena off Tamzin, and in a vew minutes the 'ouse wos like Bedlam. You be'ant married, be 'ee, sur?

"No."

"Then you doan knaw nothin bout life, you doan't. Gor jay! ow they cheldern ded screech for sure. But they ded'n waake mauther, not they. She slaiped through et oal, and snored like a tomcat into the bargain. Aw she's a gefted wumman, my wife es. But owsummever, I got em off again arter a bit and got into bed again. I wos just gittin braave'n slaipy when I 'eerd the sound of osses comin from Kernick way. 'Gor jay!' ses I, 'tes the exciseman! He've bin fer ould Martin and now he's comin fer me.'"

At this I became interested. "The sound of horses," I said; "were they coming fast?"

"Aw iss, braave coose, but not gallopin'. Well I lied luff and wos oal ov a sweat, but twadd'n no excisemen t'oal, fer just as they got by the church gates they stopped for a minit."

"What time was this?"

"Aw 'bout haaf-past two or dree o'clock. Well, I 'eerd 'em talkin', and arter a bit I 'eerd a wumman spaik, so you may be sure I pricked up my ears like a greyhound when he do 'ear a span-

iel yelp among the vuss bushes. So up I gits and looks out."

"Well, and what did you see?"

"A man and two wimmen."

"Ah!" I cried.

"Well, they ded'n stay long, for one of the wimmen zaid they wos vollied. She must a 'ad sharp ears, for I ded'n 'ear nothin'."

"Which way did they go?"

"They zeemed unaisy, when I 'eerd the man zay they wud go on to Scacewater, an' then turn back to Penhale."

"Well?" I cried eagerly, "go on."

"Aw, I thot I cud maake 'ee hark. Well, I 'eerd em go up by Sentry, and then go on Terras way, purty coose."

"Is that all?"

"Well, after that I cudden slaip, and I jist lied and lied for long time, and then I'eerd sum more osses comin'. 'Gor jay!' ses I, 'wot's the mainen ov this?' I got out abed again, mauther slaipin' oal the time, and arkened with oal the ears I 'ad."

"And what happened?"

"Why, I zeed three hossmen ride long, and they galloped arter the others as ef they'd knawed which way they went."

"And is that all?"

"Ed'n that nuff? I cudden slaip a wink arterwards. Fust, I thot they might be the French, then I thot they might be ghoasts, but I tell 'ee it maade me oal luny, and 'eer I be this mornin', weth not aaf my sharpness. Wy I tell 'ee, sur, I be a uncommon man ordnarly."

I asked the landlord many other questions, but although he informed me many things about the roads, he could tell me nothing more about the midnight travellers. However, I had heard enough to assure me that I had come on the track of my late companions, and I was also assured that the maid Nancy was being pursued by the Killigrews.

"Where and what is Penhale?" I asked presently.

"Penhale, sur, is one of the five manor 'ouses in the parish. Maaster Trewint es the oaner ov et. It 'ave bin in the family for scores a years."

"I wonder if that will be one of Uncle Anthony's hiding-places?" I mused, "if it is, he hath doubtless taken Mistress Nancy there, and is probably there now, unless the Killigrews have relieved him of his charge."

"Is Trewint the squire of your parish?" I asked Bill Best.

"Well, sur, ther eden no squire so to spaik. But 'ees a well-connected man, sur. Why, he do belong to the Tregarrick family, which ded once own oal Roche."

This set me thinking again. Uncle Anthony had told me that he was a gentleman; he had hinted that his family was as good as my own Why had he taken up his abode at Roche Rock, which had belonged to the Tregarricks? Was there any meaning in his going to Mr. Trewint, who was related to the Tregarricks? These and many other questions troubled me for a long time.

After considering the whole situation for an hour or more, I determined to find my way to Penhale and there make inquiries. I thought it better to go there afoot, first because the distance was scarcely two miles, and second because I desired to attract no attention. Leaving the Manor House of Resugga on my left, I walked on until I came to a little wooded dell in which two houses were built. Here I stayed awhile, arrested by the beauty of the scene. The place was called Terras, and was very fair to look upon. A little stream purled its way down the valley, under giant trees, and filled as my mind was with many things, I could but stop and listen to the music of the water as it mingled with the sound of rustling leaves overhead. As I passed on, I saw the miners working in the moors. They were tin-streamers, and were, so I was told, making riches rapidly. After this I stopped at a farm called Trelyon, from whence I could see Trelyon Downs. Here legend had it giants lived, and streamed the moors for minerals, and made bargains with the devil in order that success might attend their labours. After leaving Trelyon I was not long in reaching Penhale, a house of considerable size and importance, and here I stopped and looked about me. The house was comparatively new and very substantial, while signs of prosperity were everywhere to be seen. Fine trees grew all around, and the gardens were well planted. Evidently a well-to-do yeoman lived here.

I tried to think of an excuse for entering, but presently gave up the idea. If Uncle Anthony

and Mistress Nancy were there it would not be well for them to know my whereabouts; and yet if I were to fulfil my promise to Peter Trevisa, and thus retain Trevanion, I must know if they were behind the walls which looked as though they might hide mysteries.

Very soon I bethought me of the stables, and was just starting to find them, when I saw a well-fed, portly man come out of the front door.

"Jack," he shouted.

"Yes, sur," replied a voice.

"Bring my horse." On saying this he entered the house again.

The place was perfectly silent, save for the stamping of horses' hoofs and the bleat of sheep in the distance. From the spot on which I stood I could easily see and hear without being seen.

Presently the man, whom I took to be the owner of the place, came to the door again, and this time some one accompanied him, although whoever it was kept out of sight.

"Well, I must be going. You say I shall not be seeing you again."

I could not hear the murmured reply.

"Well, have your own way. I have heard of the old chapel and well in St. Mawgan, where it is said an old priest lives; but man, you are safer here."

After this I heard nothing, and a little later the owner of the place rode away. I waited until he was well out of hearing, when I found my way to the stables. In the stableyard I saw the man who had brought his master's horse to the door.

"Is your master at home?" I asked.

"No sur; missus es."

"Ah, well, she'll be of no use. She wouldn't know if Mr. Trewint has a horse for sale."

On this I entered the stable, and to my delight saw the animal Amelia Lanteglos had ridden from Endellion, with two others.

"Maaster 'aant got noan for sale," replied the man. "We're right in the tealin' time, and oal the hosses be in use."

"How's that?" I replied; "here are three doing nothing. One of these would suit me. I can call again when your master will be at home."

"It'll be no good, sur. Maaster waant be 'ome till laate to-night. He's gone to St. Austell market, and afore he do git back thaise hosses 'll be gone. They'll be out of the staable by haalf-past nine this ev'nin'. I've got oaders to saddle 'em at that time."

I seemed to be in luck's way. By pure chance, so it seemed to me, I had found out the whereabouts of Mistress Nancy and her companions, and had also discovered their destination. So without asking more questions I left Penhale, and then walked back to St. Stephen's along a footpath which led by a farm called Tolgarrick, and the Manor House of Resugga.

I formed my plan of action. I would be even with Uncle Anthony for the trick he had played me, and I would take the maid Nancy to Peter Trevisa's house, for both had angered me. And yet even at this time my heart revolted against the course I had marked out.

By nine o'clock that night I stood outside Penhale with Chestnut by my side. I chose a sheltered position, and I felt sure that no one knew I was there. I waited anxiously, and watched the stable doors closely. Half-past nine came, and I grew anxious; ten o'clock passed, and all was silent as the grave. Had the groom deceived me? Had Uncle Anthony discovered my visit and formed new plans accordingly.

Bidding Chestnut stand still, I crept cautiously towards the stables. A few seconds later I saw to my chagrin that I had been outwitted. The horses I had seen in the morning had gone.

"Never mind," I said grimly, "I'll not give up yet."

I mounted Chestnut and rode westward in the direction in which I thought St. Mawgan lay; but I had not gone far when I again came to a standstill. If Uncle Anthony had suspected me, and changed the time of his departure, might he not also alter his plans completely? Besides, even though he intended going to the old chapel at St. Mawgan, it was impossible for me to find it that night. Clouds had obscured the sky, and I was ignorant of the country. At eleven o'clock, therefore, I drew up at an inn at a village called Summercourt, disappointed and angry. Here I decided to remain for the night.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HAUNTED CHAPEL OF ST. MAWGAN.

I HAD fully intended to be up betimes on the morning following my arrival at Summercourt, and although I gave the landord of the inn no instructions to call me, I had no doubt but that I should wake early. So tired was I, however, and so much had my rest been broken, that it was past midday before I was aroused from the deep sleep into which I had fallen. Consequently it was well on in the afternoon before I started for St. Mawgan. I knew that the parish was largely under Catholic influence. The Arundel family owned a house there, but I had no idea as to the whereabouts of the chapel. This could only be discovered by searching, and, impatient with myself for losing so much time, I rode rapidly past St. Columb, and reached St. Mawgan just as the shades of evening were descending. I should, doubtless, have accomplished the journey more quickly if I had not missed my way and wandered several miles out of my course. Arrived at the parish church, however, I found that my difficulties had only just begun. I was afraid to make too many inquiries concerning this chapel, for fear the Killigrews might hear of my questionings, for, although I had seen no traces of them, I felt sure they were following Mistress Nancy Molesworth. I found, moreover, that the few people in the parish were anything but intelli-

gent, and could give no information of value. At length, after much searching and many round-about inquiries, I heard of a haunted d ll about a mile and a half from St. Mawgan, where the devil was said to reside.

An old farm labourer gave me the information, and with much earnestness besought me to keep away from it.

"The devil 'ave allays come there, sur," remarked the old man. "Tes a very low place. Tes a 'olla (hollow) between two 'oods. The papist priests ded kip un off while they was 'lowed to live there, but since the new religion tho'ull Sir Nick have jist done wot 'ee's a mind to."

"How did the papist priest keep him off?" I asked.

"Well, sur, they ded build a chapel here, and they ded turn the well ov water, where the devil made hell broth, into good clain watter. 'Twas a 'oly well when they wos there, sur, so I've been tould. But law, sence the priests be gone he've gone there to live again, and I've 'eerd as how ee've bin zid in the chapel."

"Have you seen him?"

"I wudden, sur, for worlds; but, Jimmy Jory zid un, sur."

"And what did he look like?"

"Jist like a wrinkled-up ould man, sur."

"And which is the way to this chapel?"

"'Tis down there, sur," replied the old man, pointing southward; "but doan't 'ee go nist the plaace, sur, doan't 'ee. 'Tis gittin' dark, an 'ee'l zoon be out now."

Unwittingly the old labourer had confirmed the words of Mr. Trewint at Penhale. Evidently a hermit did live at the ruined chapel. Probably he was one of the few remaining anchorites which were yet to be found in the county. One of those who, tired of the world, had sought solitude, even as the last heir of the Tregarricks had sought it, when he built St. Michael's Chapel on Roche Rock.

Unmindful, therefore, of the old man's warnings, I found my way down the valley. The wooded hills sloped up each side of me, which so obscured the evening light that I had difficulty in finding my way. The place seemed terribly lonely, I remember; no sound broke the stillness save the rippling of a little stream of water which ran towards the sea, and the occasional soughing of the wind among the trees.

Once, as I stood still and listened, it seemed to me that the very silence made a noise, and a feeling of terror came over me, for the old labourer's stories became real. My mission, too, seemed to be more foolish at each step I took, and in the stillness I seemed to hear voices bidding me return. Nature had given me strong nerves, however, and presently the spirit of adventure got hold of me again, and then I pushed on merrily. I had gone perhaps a mile from St. Mawgan when I saw, in spite of the gathering darkness, a distinct footpath leading southward. This I followed, although the valley became darker and darker. By and by, however, it ended in a little green amphitheatre. This I judged to be about

ten yards across, and the only outlet was the pathway by which I had just come. The little open space, however, was a relief to me, because the evening light was not altogether shut out, and I looked eagerly around me in the hope that I had arrived at the spot for which I had been searching.

Twice did I wander around the green spot, but the trees which grew around were so thick that I could discover nothing beyond them.

"It must be all an idle tale," I mused bitterly, "and I've been a dupe to silly stories. Why should I trouble more? I'll go back to the inn at St. Mawgan, get Chestnut saddled, and start for London to-morrow"; but even as the thought passed through my mind, I saw a dark bent form creep along the grass, and then was hidden from me by the thick undergrowth.

Without hesitation I made my way to the spot where the dark object had disappeared, and then saw a slight clearage in the bushes, which had before escaped my attention. A few seconds later I had entered another open place, but it was smaller than the other, and situated at the foot of the rising ground. I again looked around me, but could see nothing, and was musing as to the course I should take, when I heard a slight groan. I hurried to the spot from whence the sound came, drawing my sword as I did so. I did not go far, however, for I saw, almost hidden by the trees, a dark building.

"Hallo!" I cried aloud.

But there was no answering voice.

"There is some one here," I said; "speak, or I fire."

"What would you, Roger Trevanion?" said a strange voice.

I must confess that my heart gave a bound as I heard my own name in this lonely place, but I quickly mastered myself.

"I would see you," I replied.

"You cannot see spirits of just men made perfect," was the reply. "They can see you while they remain invisible."

"We will see," I replied. "I have flint and steel here. I will light up this place, then perchance I shall find that the living as well as the dead inhabit the place."

I heard a low murmuring, then the voice replied: "Trouble not yourself, Roger Trevanion, there shall be light," and in a few seconds, as if by magic, a small lamp shone out in the darkness, revealing several objects, which at first I could not understand. As my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, I discovered a rude table on which stood a crucifix; on the walls too, rough and unplastered as they were, I saw pictures of a religious order. But my attention was drawn from other objects by a pallet bed which lay in the corner of the room, on which a human body lay.

"Uncle Anthony," I cried, not that I recognized him, but the name came involuntarily to my lips.

"Why are you here, Roger Trevanion?" asked a voice which I detected as Uncle Anthony's.

"Nay, rather, why are you here?" I cried; "and where is Mistress Nancy Molesworth?"

"She is where you will never reach her," he replied, bitterly I thought, and yet in a feeble tone of voice.

"What mean you?" I cried, and then I saw that his head was bandaged.

"I mean that through your faithlessness"—he hesitated as though he knew not how to proceed.

"The Killigrews!" I cried.

"Ay."

"They overtook you?"

"Nay, they came here. I did my best, but what was I against three? Once I thought we should have beaten them, for Mistress Nancy wounded one of them sorely."

"But where are they gone? Which way did they take her?"

"Doubtless to Endellion. Why I tell you this I know not. Had you been faithful this need not have been."

"Tell me the whole story," I said at length.

"Why should I? But it doth not matter now. You can do her no harm, neither can you save her from the Killigrews. Well, perchance it is God's will. They are of the true faith, and—and you know most of the story, Roger Trevanion. You followed us to Penhale; the maid saw you, and so we left the house earlier than we had intended, and by a road through the fields. We reached this spot in safety, but they found us. Otho was with them, and, well, I am no fighter,—I did my best, but they took her. I—I am wounded in the head—a sword cut."

Why I knew not, but my heart seemed a hot fire.

"And is Mistress Nancy gone with these three Killigrews—alone?"

"Her serving-maid, Amelia, cried out to go with her, and they took her."

"Ah!" I cried, relieved.

He gave me details of the struggle, which I need not write down here, and which I thought, in spite of the fact that he seemed to hide the truth, told that he had fought well.

"And did not this hermit help you?"

"Michael is weaker than a child," replied Anthony, "he did nothing but pray."

"And how long since this took place?"

"Four hours ago."

"Four hours!—only?"

"That is all."

"They can be followed, she can be delivered!"

"No, no," murmured Uncle Anthony; "tell me, Roger Trevanion, why would you deliver her?"

"Because, because!——" then I stopped, I could not formulate the thought in my mind. "Did she go willingly?" I asked.

"Nay," cried the old man bitterly, "I—I think they gagged her; they bound her to her horse. She cried out sorely while she could, she struggled—and I—I could do nothing."

My blood ran through my veins like streams of fire; there were many questions I wanted to ask, but there was no time. I seemed to see her struggling with the Killigrews. I pictured her look of loathing as she talked with them.

"Trevanion or no Trevanion," I cried, as I hur-

ried up the valley, "I'll strike another blow for the maid's liberty. I know she doth not trust me; but I'll free her from Otho Killigrew. Some one must have seen her—I'll follow them. They cannot well get beyond Padstow to-night!"

A little later I had taken the road which the landlord of the inn at St. Mawgan had told me led to Padstow. I rode hard till I came to a roadside inn. It was the first house I had noticed since I had left Mawgan. A light was shining from one of the windows, and I decided to stop.

"If they have passed here some one will have seen them," I mused, "and I must not go farther without inquiry."

I accordingly dismounted, and called for the landlord. An elderly man appeared, and in the light of the moon, which had just risen, I saw that his shoulders were bent, and that he craned his neck forward while he scanned my face.

"What 'll 'ee plaise to 'ave, sur?" he asked in a wheedling tone of voice.

"A bottle of wine," I replied.

"Iss, to be sure, I'll tell 'em, sur. Your hoss do look flighty, sur. You wa'ant caare to laive un."

"He will stand quietly," I replied; "but I'll fasten him to your crook here. I should not advise you to go near him."

"You be'ant comin' in, sur, be 'ee?"

"Just a minute," I replied.

"Ah iss, to be sure," he answered, leading the way into a dark room.

"But you have a room with a light here," I ob-

jected, as he pushed a candle into a smouldering fire.

"Iss, sur, but tes used, sur. To tell the truth, sur, for I can zee you be a gen'leman, my wife's sister is there. She's terble bad weth small-pox, sur."

"Small-pox!" I cried aghast.

"Aw, iss, sur. I doan't go ther' myself, and tes makin' terble 'ard agin my custom."

All the while he was pulling out the cork from a bottle of wine.

"I don't think I'll stay to drink," I said, thinking of the man's statement about his wife's sister. "Of course I'll pay for it," I added, noting the look of chagrin on his face.

"You be a rail gen'leman," he remarked, as I threw down a guinea.

"Have you been away from the house to-day?" I asked.

"No, sur."

"Have you noticed a party on horseback ride by this afternoon?"

"What time would it be, sur?"

"About four o'clock, I should imagine."

"No, sur, there ain't no party of no sort gone long 'ere."

"You are quite sure?"

"Iss, sur. Be you lookin' out for a party, sur?"

"Yes," I replied, "but I must have been misinformed."

"How many was in the party, sur?"

"Why?"

"Well, Bill Bennetto, Maaster Veryan's hind,

was over here little while ago, and he zaid as ow 'ee'd zeed a party of five ride through St. Eval. Ther' wos three gentlemen and two laadies, sur. They wos ridin' 'ard for Padstow, 'ee zaid."

"What time was this?"

"'Bout fower a clock, sur. Praps that was the lot you was wantin'."

"How far is it from here to Padstow."

"Oa ten or twelve mile, I shud think."

"A straight road?"

"Aw, iss, you can't miss et."

Glad to get out of the house infected with small-pox, I contented myself with this information, and a few seconds later I was on Chestnut's back again, riding northward. I had gone only a short distance, however, when I came to a junction of roads. Here a difficulty presented itself, for I knew not which way to take.

"What did the fellow mean by telling me it was a straight road?" I grumbled angrily, and then it struck me suddenly that he seemed very anxious for me to leave his house. I looked eagerly around me in the hope of getting out of my difficulty, but it was a lonely place, and no houses were in sight. Presently, however, I saw a light shining, and making my way towards it, discovered a cottage.

"Which is the way to Padstow?" I asked of a man who held a lantern in his hand, and who evidently lived at the cottage.

"Dunnaw, sur, I be sure. I speck the best way will be for 'ee to go to Little Petherick and inquire,"

"Is it a straight road?"

"Lor bless 'ee, sur, no. 'Tes as crooked as a dog's hind leg."

I wondered at this, and asked the man if he knew the landlord of the Farmer's Rest.

"Aw, iss I do knaw un, sur."

"What kind of a man is he?"

"A littlish man, with a long neck like a gander, and sharp eyes like a rat."

"Yes, I know, but is he a respectable man!"

"Iss, 'ee've saved a braavish bit of money. I do 'ear as how 'ee've got vour hundred in Tura Bank."

"His wife's sister has small-pox, hasn't she?"

"What do 'ee main, sur?"

I repeated my question.

"Why, bless 'ee, sur, his wife aan't got no sister. She's Jenny Johnses onnly darter. As fur small-pox, I never 'eerd tell o' noan."

Giving the man a piece of money, I rode back towards the Farmer's Rest again. Evidently the landlord had been purposely deceiving me. Why? My heart thumped loudly against my ribs, for I had grave suspicion that he desired to hide something from me. I made my way very quietly to the house. If he had reasons for deceiving me, it behoved me to be careful. I saw that the light still shone from the window of the room in which the landlord said his wife's sister lay. Telling Chestnut to stand still, I crept silently towards the house. I saw that the door was closed, and although I listened intently I could hear no sound. Placing my hand on the door handle, I was about

to try and open it, when I saw a woman come from a building close by which was evidently used as a washhouse. She did not see me, neither did she come to the front door at which I stood. As far as I could judge, she was making her way to the yard at the back of the inn.

"Surely," I thought, "that is Amelia Lanteglos."

I started to follow her, when, the girl hearing my step turned around, and I saw that I was right.

"Amelia," I whispered.

"Good Lord, sur, is that you?" was her answer.

"Yes, where is your mistress?"

"Aw, I be glad, I be glad," she sobbed, "we've 'ad a terble time, sur—a terble time."

"Is your mistress ill?" I asked.

"She'll go mazed zoon."

"Why?"

She looked anxiously around, and then turned towards me again.

"Ther's nobody harkenin', nobody do knaw you be 'ere, sur, do mun?"

"No one. I called here less than an hour ago, and the landlord told me that his wife's sister had small-pox. So I rode away, but I found out that he told me false. That's why I've come back again. No one has seen me but you."

"And you be my young missus' friend, be'ant 'ee, sur? You doan't main she no 'arm."

"No."

"Then I'll tell 'ee, sur. She's inside there weth Master Otho."

I suspected this, so waited for her to proceed.

"Colman es in the 'ouse too, sur; but 'ee's in bed. Mistress Nancy ded fire a pistol at un, and 'urt 'es arm. That was when Uncle Anthony was weth us."

"But there were three."

"Iss, sur. Maaster Clement es gone to Padstow."

"What for."

"Gone to fetch the priest, sur."

"Why? To marry Otho to your mistress?"

The maid sobbed. "She'll go mazed, sur. She's in ther weth Maaster Otho. You do knaw his way, sur. I believe he'll jist frighten her till she do marry un."

"But why did they stop here?"

"'Twas on account of Mistress Nancy, sur. She made out to faint an like that, sur, thinkin' to gain time. But Maaster Otho can't be aisy bait. He brought her here, and ded send Clement off for the priest. Besides, Maaster Colman could hardly sit on the hoss."

I saw the danger. In the then condition of the marriage laws, the maid Nancy was practically helpless. If the priest went through a form of service, even without the maid's assent, Otho could, by means of the testimony of the landlord of the inn, claim that a legal marriage had taken place. What was to be done, therefore, would have to be done quickly.

"Where are your horses, Amelia?"

She pointed to the house in which they were stabled.

"You can saddle them without any one knowing?"

"Aw, iss sur."

"Do, then."

With that I turned towards the front door of the inn again; and I must here confess that I hugely enjoyed the situation. The love of adventure was strong upon me, and I laughed at the thought of thwarting the Killigrews. I owed the landlord a debt for deceiving me. I therefore went to the spot where I had left Chestnut, and, having taken some stout cord from my saddlebag, came back, and, on trying to open the door, found it barred. Then I knocked sharply.

"Who's there?" It was Boundy, the landlord, who spoke.

"Come, Boundy," I cried, "open the door quick; there's no time to lose."

"Es that you, sur?" he responded, and immediately drew back the bolts. No sooner had he done so than I caught him and dragged him outside.

"Make a sound, and you are a dead man!" I said, in a whisper.

Something in my voice, I suppose, told him that I meant what I said, for he made no sound, neither did he struggle when I bound him hand and foot. He was no stronger than a lad of twelve, and very little heavier. I therefore took him to the stables, where Amelia Lanteglos had gone.

"Amelia," I said, "here's the landlord. You need not be afraid. He's bound. But if he makes a noise, stuff some hay in his mouth."

The girl grasped the situation in a second. "Oal right, sur," she said with a grin, and I knew I could trust her. Then I went back and entered the inn, closing the door after me, and silently bolting it. I heard the murmuring of women in the kitchen behind; evidently they knew nothing of what had taken place. After this I made my way to the room in which Otho Killigrew had taken Mistress Nancy Molesworth.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SCENE AT A WAYSIDE INN.

I was about to knock when I heard the sound of voices.

"And do you think," I heard a voice say, which I recognized as Mistress Nancy's, "that although you force me into this marriage, I shall really be your wife?"

"Ay, that you will." It was Otho who spoke in his low, mocking way.

"But I will not be your wife. I despise you, loathe you."

"That feeling will soon pass away when you are the wife of Otho Killigrew. You will love me all the more for being so determined to have you. And I—well, I would a thousand times rather have this than an ordinary wedding. Clement and Father O'Brien will soon be here. I thought I heard his voice a few seconds ago."

"But I will die sooner than wed you!"

"Ah, I like to see your eyes shine like that. It makes you more handsome than ever. With me as master, and you as mistress of Restormel, we shall be much sought after in the county."

"Is this the act of a gentleman, Otho Killigrew? The very gypsies will cry out against you as a mean knave."

"It is the act of a gentleman," replied Otho coolly. "You had every opportunity to wed me in a way befitting your station, but you would not have it so. You trusted to a trickster, and thereby sadly compromised your reputation. Now I must treat you as I am obliged. You should be thankful that I am willing to wed you after such conduct."

"I would I had trusted the man you call a trickster!" cried the maid bitterly, at which it flashed upon me that I was playing the part of an eavesdropper. True, I felt justified in listening, at the same time I felt uncomfortable, and was about to knock at the door when his words arrested me again.

"Come, Nancy, let us act reasonably. If you will promise to go to Endellion with me, and wed me there, we will have done with this method of going on. Let me have a kiss and we will be friends."

He evidently laid hands on her as he spoke, for the maid cried out. At this I was unable to control myself, and I pushed the door with so much vehemence that the rusty hinges gave way, and I entered the room.

Even at that time I noticed that the apartment

was bare of all furniture, save for a few straight-back chairs and a rickety table. Mistress Nancy stood at one corner of the room, her eyes flashing fiercely and her face as pale as death. Otho was holding one of her hands, but on hearing the noise of my entrance had turned his face angrily towards me.

I knew I dared not give him time, for doubtless he carried dagger and pistols, and would use them without hesitation. I therefore leapt upon him, and in a second we were engaged in a mad struggle. As for the maid, she gave another cry which I thought told of her joy at my coming.

Maddened, desperate as he was, I soon discovered that I had not his brother Benet to deal with. He availed himself of all sorts of wrestler's tricks, and tried to use his knife, but it was no use. In a few seconds I had thrown him heavily on the floor. He lay stunned, but this I knew would not be for long.

"Mistress Nancy Molesworth," I said, turning panting to the maid, "will you trust me now?"

She looked piteously into my face. "Dare I?" she cried; "I am all alone, I have no one to help me. I would rather die than wed him," and she gave a look of loathing towards Otho. "May I trust you?"

"You may," I said eagerly, and at that moment I felt a joy in sacrificing Trevanion rather than carrying out Peter Trevisa's wishes. "As God is above us, I will take you wherever you wish to go, and I give my life to see that no harm happens to you!" and this I said like one compelled,

for my words seemed to be dragged from me by some wondrous power which the maid possessed.

She caught my hand eagerly. Her eyes seemed to burn like live coals, and as I thought she looked into the very depth of my life.

"Yes, I will trust you," she cried, "and I will bless you forever. But can you take me away. These men seem to have friends everywhere."

"I can, and I will," I cried eagerly, for at that time my heart was hot, and I felt no weakness. "Come quickly," I continued, "I have prepared my plans." Then turning around I saw two women in the room, evidently the landlord's wife and a servant-maid.

"What do 'ee main? who be you?" screamed one of the women.

But I took no heed. Mistress Nancy caught some clothing which she had thrown on the table, and although the woman tried to bar the doorway, I led her out. All this time Otho had been lying on the floor like one dead.

I went to the door which I had bolted, and was about to open it, but I desisted, for I heard the clatter of horses' hoofs. For a moment my heart sank within me; I felt sure that Colman Killigrew had returned with the priest. If that were so, I should be one against many. The maid Nancy had also heard the noise, for her face was piteous to behold.

"'Tis they, 'tis they," she cried. "Oh, you will not let me fall into their hands, will you?"

It was then that I realized the secret of my heart. At that moment I knew that Mistress

Nancy Molesworth was all the world to me, and that all my vows never to care for a woman again were no more than the chaff which the wind drives away. My blood was on fire, and I vowed that all the Killigrews on earth should not take her from me.

"No, by God, no!" I cried, "they shall not get you."

My words seemed to give her confidence, for she became calmer and steady again.

"Give me a pistol," she said, "I will help you."

At that moment there was a sound of knocking at the door.

"Let us in!" cried a voice, which I recognized as Clement's, and the landlord's wife rushed towards the door. Ill as I like to touch a woman I felt I must not hesitate, and so with no gentle hand I threw her against the door, whereupon she went into violent hysterics. As for the servant, she went into the backyard screaming. Seeing a key in the door, I quickly turned it, and placed it in my pocket.

"Come, we can follow the servant-maid," I said to Mistress Nancy, but at that moment Otho Killigrew staggered towards us, with his knife uplifted. I struck him a cruel blow, but it could not be helped, and again he fell heavily. Seeing the barrel of a pistol gleaming from his belt, I took it from him and gave it to the maid. She took it without a word, and I knew by the light in her eyes that she meant to use it.

Meanwhile Clement Killigrew kept beating the door, and I knew that he would ere long succeed

in breaking it down. It is true I had cocked my pistol, while Mistress Nancy held hers ready to shoot, but I knew not how many were outside, so I dared not wait. I therefore took the dear maid's hand and led her into the yard.

"Amelia," I cried.

"Here you be, sur."

I hurried towards her, and found two horses saddled.

"Mount, mount," I cried quickly, "they'll be after us."

"No, they waan't," retorted Amelia, "I've turned all the other horses out in the field."

"And where's Boundy?"

"Lyin' inside there, weth his mouth chucked vull of hay."

In spite of our danger, I could not help laughing aloud.

By this time they had both mounted, and as yet no one had followed us into the yard.

"There's another way down to the road?" cried Amelia, "it'll bring us out furder down. Where's yore oss, sur?"

"He's all right. You are a clever girl, Amelia." This I said while we went silently down the cart track under the trees.

On reaching the road I gave a low whistle, and in a second I heard the clatter of hoofs, as Chestnut came towards me. He gave a whinney as he saw me, but before I could mount I heard a bullet whiz by me, and strike hazel bushes on the top of the hedge. Then I saw Clement Killigrew and the priest coming towards us. Great

as was my longing to stop and meet these men, I deemed it prudent to get away as quickly as possible. A new fear had come into my life, a fear that they should harm the maid Nancy. I sprang to the stirrup therefore, and before I was fairly on Chestnut's back he started into a gallop. I checked him for fear I should leave my companions behind, but I need not have feared. Their horses kept neck to neck with mine. For a time I could hear no one following, but presently the sound of horses' hoofs rang out in the night air.

I stopped and listened. "There is only one horse," I said, and as I spoke the sound ceased. Again we rode on, and again I could hear the following horseman; a mile or so farther on we pulled up a second time, and as soon as we stopped our pursuer also stopped.

"What is the meaning of that, I wonder?" I said aloud. "We have been riding more slowly and he has not gained upon us. When we stop he follows our example. What does it mean?"

"It is Clement," said Mistress Nancy; "he will have got his orders from Otho."

"But why does he not seek to overtake us?"

"It would not suit his purpose," cried she; "he dare not come too close to us. He will be afraid. He knows you have pistols. His purpose will be to keep us in sight and mark where we go."

"But what good will that do him?"

"When he thinks we are safely housed, he will send for help."

"But how?"

"The Killigrews have followers all around in

this part of the country," she said. "They have friends unknown to you."

"But we will ride right on to the west of the country, where Hugh Boscawen is raising men against the enemies of the King."

"Even there he will have friends. Clement is almost as cunning as Otho."

"I will go back and fight him," I said quietly. "We will soon be rid of him."

"He will know of your coming, and will ride away from you. If you follow him he will lead you into some trap."

"But we must be rid of him," I cried; "we shall not be safe while he follows."

Then the maid held her peace, but I knew she greatly feared Clement Killigrew. At this I became anxious, for, truth to tell, I felt awkward and helpless now. I dared not make other suggestions, because I believed that in spite of what she had said she still failed to trust me. Then I had cared little about her good opinion concerning me, now I would dare anything to win her smile. I determined that no harm should come to her, for my heart yearned for her, even as the heart of a mother must yearn for her first-born son. I looked at her as she rode by my side, and in the light of the moon I could discern every feature. Pale she was and anxious, but to me her face was glorious beyond compare. I saw resolution, foresight, a nobleness in her every movement, but all this made her further removed from me. In the light of my new-found love she became a new creature. All my being went out to her, all my

life I was ready to lay at her feet. I remembered what I had said on Roche Rock—I had told her that I cared for no woman, that she was nothing to me but the veriest stranger. I would have given anything to have recalled those words, but it could not be. I thought of what I had promised Peter Trevisa, and I was filled with shame. I tried to drive the promise from my mind, but it had been made.

All this made me silent and awkward, and I rode by her side eager to save her from the Killigrews, yet distrusting myself sorely.

And yet with my love, painful as it was, came joys unknown to me before. Never till then had I realized what a gladness it was to live, to think, to act. The road on which I rode became a scene of beauty, the country air scented with the perfume of spring seemed to me like a breath from Paradise, the murmuring of the sea in the distance made heaven near. So much, indeed, did I live in the thought of my love, and of what she would think of me, that for the moment I forgot that Clement Killigrew was following us, as a sleuth-hound follows his prey. In my heart I called her my lady Nancy, and wondered what I could do to make her think better of me. For I could not help feeling that she had turned to me as a last resource, and that even now, should John Polperro appear, she would immediately dispense with my services. Although I hated this thought, I could not blame her for it, for who was I that she should trust me? I remembered, too, that since we left the inn her words to me had been

cool and distant, as though she were ashamed of her emotion at the time when I found her in the room with Otho Killigrew.

I was recalled to myself at length by Amelia Lanteglos, who said with a laugh:

"Ours be good 'osses, be'ant 'em, sur?"

"Yes," I replied; "I did not think Uncle Anthony could find such good ones among the moors."

"Thaise be'ant Uncle Anthony's. These belong to the Killigrews. The one I do ride belonged to Maaster Otho, 't'other to Maaster Coleman."

"Good," I cried, thinking what a quick-witted girl she was. "You are a clever maid, Amelia."

"I ain't a-lived 'mong the Killigrews for nothin'!" she said; "besides I'd do anything for Mistress Nancy."

Her mistress did not speak, but I noted the look she gave her.

"He es still follin'," continued Amelia; "we shall 'ave to do summin zoon. What time es et, I wonder?"

"About nine o'clock, I expect," I replied. "Ah! yonder is light. I wonder if it is a kiddleywink?"

"Why?" asked Mistress Nancy.

"I hope it is," I replied, for at that moment a plan flashed through my mind.

A few minutes later we rode up to a little hamlet consisting of four houses, one of which was a public house.

"We will dismount here?" I said.

"To what purpose?" asked Mistress Nancy.

"I have a plan in my mind," I replied.

"But if we stop here Clement will act."

"So will I."

She spoke no word but dismounted, while I called the landlord.

"Have you stabling for three horses?" I asked when he appeared.

"Jist," was his reply.

"And a room into which these ladies can go; a private room?"

"Aw, iss, sur. Ther's the pa'lor. They ca' go in theer."

"Very well." I quickly saw them in the room, and having ordered refreshments for them I left. I felt as though Mistress Nancy did not desire my company, and I determined not to force it upon her. Then I hurried to the stables, where the three horses had been put.

"Have you a lock to the stable door?" I asked of the man who had taken care of the horses.

"Law no, sur; we doan't want no locks. Ther's jist a hasp to kip the door from blawin' open."

"Are there no highwaymen or horse-stealers in these parts?"

"We ain't a 'ad a 'oss stailed for 'ears," was the reply.

"Well, keep your eye on that stable," I said sternly. "If anything happens to those horses, you'll be hanged."

"I'll mind, sur," replied the man; "nobody shall tich 'em. Nobody shall go into the stable but me;" and I knew by the look of dogged determination on his face that he meant what he said.

At this moment I heard the clatter of hoofs, and I hurried into the house. I saw the landlord go to the door, and heard him say to the horseman: "No sur, you can't stable yer 'oss. A party 'ave jist come, sur, and I've only room for dree 'osses."

"Well, all right," said Clement Killigrew in tones scarcely above a whisper, "fasten him here to the crook at the door, 'twill be just as well. I suppose I can have a bottle of wine. By the way, do not let the other party know I have come here."

"No, sur, I wa'ant let em knaw, but I a'ant got no wine. A jug of good ale, sur. "

"All right, that will do;" then he said something in low tones to the landlord, which I did not hear.

"All right, sur," I heard the innkeeper say in reply. "I'll 'tend to et, sur; but you'll 'ave to go into the kitchen among the farmers-men, the palor is okkipied."

There was no reply to this, and then Clement Killigrew went into the kitchen.

Without hesitation I entered the room after him. All had happened as I expected. He had followed us to the inn, he had come in quietly, he had made arrangements with the landlord to take a message to some one near with whom he doubtless had influence, and now he would wait until help came. Then he would try and recapture Mistress Nancy and take her back to Endellion. Consequently, I determined to act at once. My purpose was to go into the room,

and as soon as possible quarrel with him. I knew that the Killigrews never brooked an insult, and I thought that by careful management I should lead him to challenge me. This done, I hoped to disable him and then continue our journey before help could come. By so doing I should escape his espionage, and in a few hours be out of his reach.

He gave a start as I swaggeringly entered the room; but quickly appeared composed. Some half-dozen labourers were there, with their jugs of beer before them, and all seemed awed at the advent of two gentlemen with swords by their sides and pistols in their belts. Clement Killigrew was standing in front of the fire, for although the spring was upon us the nights were cold.

"Ill-mannered knave," I said, striding up to him, "what do you mean by standing in front of the fire?"

He looked at me angrily, and seemed about to answer back according to the manner of my address; but controlling his feelings he stood aside.

"I ask your pardon," he said politely, "it was very rude of me to keep the fire from the rest of the company."

"It was rude," I replied, "and none but a varlet would do it."

"I have expressed my apologies," was his response.

"Words are cheap," I said; "still, I suppose that is all you are able to give."

"Yes, I will give more than words," he replied,

and on this I grasped the hilt of my sword, for I hoped that I had aroused him to fight, but my hopes were short-lived. "I will be glad to pay for a glass of brandy grog for each of these good fellows," he said blandly.

The men murmured their pleasure. "A rail gen'leman," they said, looking at him with admiration, while they regarded me with angry scowls.

So far he had the best of the encounter. Evidently he had determined to avoid a quarrel. Perhaps he was afraid of me, perhaps he thought it wise to refrain from fighting.

"This man seeks to buy your friendship," I said loudly. "I will tell you what he is—he is one of two things. Either a common highway robber, or a coward. If he be the first, let him fight—or I will take him to the nearest magistrate; if he is the second, you ought to drum him out of the house."

"I am not a highway robber," he replied blandly. "To prove it I am perfectly willing to go with you and these gentlemen to the nearest magistrate; put it down then that I am a coward."

"Yes," I said, "you are a coward, all the Killigrews are."

Again his eyes flashed, and this time he placed his hand on the butt end of his pistol. On looking at me, however, he again assumed a bland expression.

"You have given me a name, sir, and you have called me a coward. Well, have your own way. The truth is, although I am travelling in civil-

ian's attire, I hope soon to be ordained a priest. For the present, therefore, I am under a vow not to fight."

"A rail gen'leman, a rail gen'leman," murmured the men.

"An arrant coward," I cried.

"I think," said Clement to the landlord, who had entered, "that your drink must be very strong here. This gentleman must be drunk."

This gave me my chance, and I was about to strike him in the face, when I heard Amelia's voice outside.

"Come, sir, quick."

I left the room, while the men gave a loud guffaw at my supposed discomfiture.

"Git the 'osses out quick, sir," cried the maid.

"Why?"

"Do as she tells you," said Mistress Nancy.

"He'll ride after us as before," I objected.

"No he wa'ant, not fur," cried Amelia.

I did as they suggested, and when I had paid the landlord I prepared to mount. I was still in the dark why Mistress Nancy had suggested this course of procedure, but it was for her to command and me to obey. I kept my eyes steadily on the front door while my two companions mounted. I thought I saw Clement Killigrew come out, but was not sure.

"Ride on quickly out of pistol range," I said to them, then I walked backward by Chestnut's side for twenty or thirty yards, all the time holding my pistol in my right hand. No one following, I placed my foot in the stirrup and was soon gallop-

ing down the road. We had not gone far when I heard the sound of hoofs behind us.

"He's again following us," I said bitterly.

"He wa'ant come fur!" said Amelia with a laugh; so I turned to her, asking what she meant.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHY I TOOK MISTRESS NANCY TO TREVISCOE.

AMELIA did not immediately answer my question, but continued to laugh like one in high spirits. "He wa'ant come fur!" she repeated; and after we had gone on, it may have been a mile or two, I stopped and listened again, and this time there were no following footsteps.

"Now we must ride quick," said the maid.

"How! what use will it be?" I asked almost angrily. "Clement's horse will be as good as either of yours."

"Iss, but his hoss is drunk!" laughed Amelia.

"Drunk?" I cried.

"Iss, drunk. When I zeed you go into the kitchen, and tried to git into a row weth Maaster Clement, I minded a trick I once seed at Endellion Church town. So I tould the chap that took your 'osses to draw me a gallon of beer. He axed me questions 'bout et, but I knawed 'ow to git over 'ee."

"And did the horse drink it?"

"Drink et! I shud think he ded. He wos thusty and sooped up every drap. Aw I shud like to see un now;" and the maid laughed again.

In spite of everything I joined her. It was purely a village girl's trick, and well carried out. A thirsty horse will drink a quantity of beer, and generally a few minutes after becomes light-headed and unable to walk straight.

"You are a clever girl, Amelia," I said again, "and you are right in saying we must ride quickly. Clement will find out the trick, and will follow us on foot."

"We've got the wind in our back," she replied, "zo ef we git a mile or so ahead, the sound of our 'osses wa'ant reach he."

So we rode hard until we came to Summercourt. Here there were several branch roads, and so far as I could see no one was stirring. Even although Clement followed on foot, he would have great difficulty in finding which way we had gone.

"Which way shall we go?" I asked of Mistress Nancy.

"Do you think it will be safe for us to go to Polperro?" she asked hesitatingly.

"I think so," I replied, although my heart was sore at saying this. "These Killigrews will know your whereabouts, and as a consequence there will be no watchers at Polperro."

"And you will take me there safely?—that is," she continued, as though she were correcting herself, "you think you can?"

"Oh yes, I can," I replied; "and I will take you whither you will."

"Then perhaps we had better go there—I know of no other place."

She spoke plaintively, and as I thought hesitatingly. I longed to offer her a home at Trevanion, but I dared not.

"It is well," I replied, as cheerfully as I could; "there is just another matter we may as well settle, however. Shall we ride there on our horses, or shall we go by water?"

"What do you mean?" she asked anxiously.

"Polperro's house is close to the sea, is it not?" I asked.

"Yes—that is, I believe so."

"Well, if we were to ride to Veryan Bay, we could get a boat and sail from there."

"And is that a better way?"

"You shall decide, if you please," was my reply. "From here to Veryan is, perchance, twelve miles. I do not imagine that the Killigrews would suspect us of going there; so even if Clement should try and follow us with another horse, I do not think he would take that course. He would rather imagine that we should make for Polperro by road."

She was silent for a few seconds, then she told Amelia to ride behind us out of earshot. At this my heart fluttered wildly, for I thought she had something of importance to say to me. For a few minutes we rode side by side without either speaking a word. The moon had risen high in the heavens, and many of the clouds had passed away, so I could see her every feature plainly.

"Do you wonder," she said presently, "that, in spite of the vow you took some time ago, I cannot feel as friendly towards you as I would."

"No," I replied almost sullenly.

"Perhaps you know that my liberty, my happiness, my fortune, the whole future of my life is at stake."

"Yes."

"It is only a few months since I returned from a convent school in France. My father, I suppose, was a rich man; and I have heard vaguely that I legally inherit a large property when I am twenty-one. That time will soon come now. That is why the Killigrews are anxious to marry me at once. All I have would then become theirs. I have heard, too, that my property is strictly entailed. But I have been told nothing definite; it would seem as though all have been in a league to keep the truth from me. Ever since I returned from school I have been practically a prisoner. But I am determined to be free!"

"You shall be free if it is in my power to make it possible," I replied.

She gave a sharp, searching look, and then went on.

"I am, as you see, entirely dependent on you."

I was silent.

"As far as I know there is but one man in whom I can trust. He—he has asked me to be his wife. He does not know that I have taken this step." She said this in a constrained, hesitating way, as though she were afraid to utter the words.

"Do you wish to be John Polperro's wife?" I stammered awkwardly. "That is, would you under ordinary circumstances choose him for your husband? Is he to you the man above all others?"

"You are a stranger to me," she went on, as though I had not spoken. "Until that night when you climbed to the housetop at Endellion I had never seen you, never heard of you. I have no claim on you save the claim that any gentlewoman who is in trouble has upon a man of honour."

"Be that as it may," I replied, "all I have and am are at your service. I will take you whither you will." This I said, I am afraid, with a sigh, for I realized that after I had taken her to Polperro my work would be done. I must leave her, perchance never to see her again.

"I may trust you fully then?"

"Fully."

"Then," she said, and her voice became hard and unsympathetic, I thought, "will you tell me why you came to Endellion? why you tried to deceive me the first time you spoke to me? why you did not answer me frankly when we were together with that old man on Roche Rock?"

Her questions came quickly, and I saw by the way she grasped the bridle rein that she was much wrought upon. In a second I realized what they meant. I saw that the moment I told her the truth, even although she might perforce trust me to take her to Polperro, all possibility of respect for me would be gone. She would think of me as one who for gain would have betrayed a woman's confidence, one who was the tool of men who had bought me for a price. I had given up all idea of taking her to Treviscoe, but the fact that I had consented to such a bargain must stamp me in her eyes as a knave. I tried to open

my mouth to speak, but for the moment I could not, and I sat staring into vacancy as though I were a born fool.

"Forgive me," she said coldly, "I will not trouble you to answer me. I have no right to know your secrets or your plans. You have promised to take me to Polperro, and your name is Trevanion; I will trust to one bearing your name to do as you have promised. I am sorry to trouble you, but I am obliged to take advantage of a gentlewoman's claim on a gentleman, and to ask you to take me to the house of my only friend."

My heart was heavy, for I saw what her words implied. She would regard me with less respect than she might regard a paid guide. Although she had said she would trust me, her heart would doubt me all the time. I knew by the tones of her voice that when the time of our parting came she would be glad. She had given me a chance of proving myself an honourable man, and I had been unable to take advantage of it. Therefore, although by all laws of chivalry I was bound to serve her, she would accept that service no longer than she absolutely needed me. Aye, she would loathe my presence and my service, even although she could not do without them.

This I knew was what my silence meant to her, but what would an explanation mean? The truth would be perhaps worse than the suspicion. Never did I despise myself as I did then, and I felt as though I dared not tell her the truth. But this was only for a second. Despise me though

she must, I would tell her the whole story. I had at least repented; whatever my motives had been in the past, they were pure now.

"Mistress Nancy Molesworth," I said, "I will answer the questions you have asked."

"No, no," she interrupted. "I have no right to know. I was wrong in asking. Your secret life can be nothing to me."

"I must answer your questions nevertheless," I replied. "And you have a right to know something of the man in whom you trust so much. I shall probably lose what little confidence you have in me, and certainly all your respect, but still I must tell you."

She protested again, in chilling, indifferent tones, but I heeded her not.

"You said just now that I was a Trevanion," I said; "well, you spoke truly, I am a Trevanion." Then sparing myself in no degree, I told her the plain facts as I have told them here. It was painful to me, painful as pulling out my eyes, but I felt I would rather she should know all than that she trust me blindfolded, while all the time she hated to be obliged to speak to me. During the time I was speaking she made no response. Our horses walked slowly on (for by this time I imagined we were entirely away from the Killigrews), and so she heard every word I uttered. Sometimes I looked at her face, but it revealed nothing to me. It was as motionless as the face of a statue.

"That is all," I said when I had finished; "but believe me in this at least: I did not fully realize

what my promise meant, and you cannot think worse of my conduct than I think myself. I know it was unworthy, but it shall not turn out to your ill. If it is in the power of man, I will take you to the place to which you would go."

"Shall we ride faster?" she said presently.

"Yes," I replied, "but which way? Will you go by road or water?"

"If we go to Veryan, we pass Tresillian, I think you said?"

"I do not remember saying so, but it is true."

"Then we will go that way."

For the next few miles we rode rapidly, neither speaking a word, but presently she slackened her horse's pace.

"How far is Tresillian from here?" she asked.

"About one mile."

"Thank you for being so frank," she said after a few seconds of silence.

"I know it must be unpleasant for me to be near you," I said bitterly; "but believe me, I will trouble you no longer than I can help."

"When you have taken me to my destination, what will you do?"

"I shall start for London."

"Why?"

"There can be nothing left for me in Cornwall. I shall join the King's standard, and honourably seek my way to fortune."

"You will lose your home, the home of your fathers?"

"It must be."

"You say that—that man gave you money."

"Yes, but he will be amply recouped. All the same, I shall send him the amount as soon as I have earned it."

"What kind of man is he? And what kind of man is—is his son?"

Again I did not spare myself, indeed I took a sort of savage delight in describing the two men I had promised to serve.

"And if you had taken me to Treviscoe, you would claim the deeds. You would have fulfilled your obligations to them, and the old homestead would be yours?"

"Forgive me," I cried, "I did not know I could have become so base," and indeed at that moment I felt unworthy to ride by her side.

"Can you think of Trevisa's purpose in wanting to get me there?" she asked, without seeming to notice my words.

"I think I told you," I replied bitterly.

"Yes, but he told you nothing of the means by which he hoped to carry out his purpose?"

"No, it was nothing to me. I was desperate, mad. Besides I thought not of that, and I—I loved adventure."

"But you give me your sacred promise that you will take me wherever I desire to go?"

"You know I do. I despise myself. Believe me, I am not at heart a base villain, and I am anxious to prove to you how bitterly I repent—what I bargained to do. I long to break my miserable promise; nay, I shall be glad to bear the consequences of failing to redeem my pledge to him. I—I will do anything, suffer anything to carry

out your purposes." This I said hesitatingly, because it came to me that I was betraying the love for her which was burning in my heart.

"You mean, then, that you will take me wherever I ask you?"

"Yes, yes!" I said eagerly.

"Then take me to Treviscoe, to the home of these—these Trevisas."

I started back aghast. "No, no!" I cried.

"But you have promised me, promised me on your honour."

"But—but you do not understand."

"I understand perfectly."

"They are both miserable, sensual wretches."

"You told me that a little while ago. But please take me there."

"I am sure they have sinister, evil purposes in wishing to get you there."

"Most likely, nevertheless I rely on your promises."

"They will do their utmost to get you into their power. They have no conscience, no sense of honour."

"I should judge not. But I will go."

I looked into her face. Her eyes shone like live coals, her face was as pale as death, but I could see she was resolute.

"Very well," I said with a sigh. "I will do as you command me."

It was now midnight, and we were within two miles of Truro.

"It is well on to twenty miles from here to Trevisa's place," I said, "and the roads are bad. To

say the least, it is a three hours' journey. There is a good inn at Truro, and I think you would be safe there. Which will you do—stay at Truro, or ride direct to Trevisa's?"

She hesitated a few seconds, then she decided to stay at Truro. I was glad of this, because I knew she must be very weary. Half an hour later our horses were in a comfortable stable, while Mistress Nancy Molesworth sat at the same table with me in one of the best inns in the county.

"You still wish me to take you to Treviscoe?" I said after we had partaken of refreshment.

"Yes. Good-night."

When I reached my room I pondered long over the events of the day, and wondered much at the maid Nancy's behaviour, but could not divine her motives. I determined to take her to Peter Trevisa as she had commanded, but I was strong in my resolve to watch over her as jealously as a young mother watches over her first-born child.

It was past midday when I awoke, and so I hurriedly dressed, wondering what the woman I had learnt to love would think of me, but when I went down-stairs I discovered that she had not yet risen. I went to the stables and examined the horses. They were well fed and groomed, and as far as I could gather, no one had been there making inquiries concerning us. This put me at my ease, and when presently Mistress Nancy appeared, I assured her of her safety.

About an hour before dark we left Truro, and during our ride she asked me many questions, the

meaning of which I could not understand. One thing she insisted on, for which in my heart I thanked her. It was that we should take my attorney, Mr. Hendy, with us to Treviscoe, for I knew that Peter Trevisa had a great terror of the law. Accordingly we called at the old lawyer's house, and asked him to accompany us. He seemed much surprised at seeing us, and the more was his astonishment when he discovered that Mistress Nancy went to Treviscoe against my will, for this he soon discovered. He said but little, however, and rode quietly with us like a man in a dream.

"What do you wish me to say to these men, Mistress Molesworth?" I said to her, when Treviscoe appeared in sight.

"Nothing," she replied absently.

"Nothing!"

"No. That is, say just what you would have said if you had carried out the purpose with which you started out."

Her words pierced me like a dagger-thrust, but I said nothing. A few minutes later we came up to the hall door.

Was Mr. Trevisa at home?

"Yes," the servant replied; "old Mr. Trevisa is, but not young Mr. Peter."

At this I was glad, but on looking at the maid Nancy's face I saw that she seemed perfectly indifferent. All the same she held tightly by her serving-maid's arm.

Old Peter seemed overjoyed at our appearance.

"What, Roger, lad!" he cried; "welcome, welcome! I see you've brought a guest for us too. Ah, she is doubly, trebly welcome. You've come for a long stay, I trust, Mistress Molesworth. Ah, but you must be tired; I will order refreshments. Here, Pollizock, you knave, take refreshments into the dining-hall without delay. I am sorry my Peter is away, but he will be back to-morrow. I have many things I want to speak to you about, Mistress Molesworth. You will not desire much company to-night, and doubtless both Roger and my friend Hendy will want to be jogging as soon as they've had a bite. Mary Tolgarrick will have many knick-knacks, such as ladies need, won't you, eh, Mary?"

"Thank you," replied the maid, her face still set and stern, "but I bought all that I need in Truro to-day; my maid Amelia will bring them to me."

"It is well," sniggered old Peter. "Be at home, my lady. Ah, I wish my Peter were here! He is always witty and gay. But he is away in your interest, Mistress Molesworth; he will have many things to tell you—many things he hath discovered. But my son Peter is wise, very wise."

The ladies went out of the room, leaving Lawyer Hendy and myself with old Peter.

"Ah, Roger lad," cried the old man, "you are a man. Smart and clever. You have saved Trevanion for yourself. When my Peter comes back we will settle the matter legally. Did you have much trouble, my lad? Ah, you must have played a deep game with the Killigrews."

I did not reply. I could not. I was too much ashamed. To think that I had planned to bring a well-born maid into such company, to remember that forever the woman I loved must think of me as doing this, was to fill my cup of degradation and misery.

And yet she had come here of her own free will—aye, she had insisted on coming after I had told her all. This I could not understand.

"Have the Killigrews any idea where you have taken their ward, Roger Trevanion?" asked old Peter presently.

"No."

"No? That is well. Tell me about it, lad?"

"I cannot to-night; I am not in the humour."

"Still surly, Roger? Ha, I know you hate to have aught to do with women. But you will be paid. You have brought her here as you said, and you shall be well paid, well paid."

My arms ached to throttle the old wretch. I longed to place my hands around his skinny neck and choke him, but I did nothing. Then old Peter began talking to Lawyer Hendy, and I fell to wondering what the end of the business was to be. That the maid Nancy would fall in with old Peter's plans, I could not believe; and yet she evidently intended to stay there. Would she desire me to be near as her protector? What were her purposes? But the maid's mind was a sealed book to me.

Presently she appeared again, her face still set, and her eyes burning with the light of purpose. Old Peter led the way into the dining-hall, and

although I could not eat, I took my seat at the table.

"We shall not need you," said old Peter to the servants; "leave us. We can talk more freely now," he whined, turning towards us. "Is there anything I can do for you, Mistress Molesworth?"

"Yes," she replied steadily; "I wish you to fulfil your obligations to Master Roger Trevanion, and give him the deeds of his estates."

"When my son Peter comes home everything shall be settled, my dear lady."

"They can be settled now, can they not?"

"It will be difficult. I do not suppose our friend Hendy hath the papers at hand."

"Yes, I have them here," replied the lawyer.

At this I knew not what to say. My mind was torn with conflicting thoughts.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHARGE OF TREASON.

Peter Trevisa seemed much chagrined at the course events were taking. Doubtless he would twist and turn like a fox before fulfilling his promises; but the maid stood expectant by as the attorney took some papers from a receptacle and laid them on the table.

"Everything is in order here," said the old man quietly. "Of course, certain formalities will have to be complied with, but——"

"I will have none of it!" I cried; "none of it." So saying, I rose to leave the room.

"Do you wish me to render you any further service, Mistress Molesworth?" I continued hastily, "Have you any commands for me?"

"Do you mean to say," she asked quietly, "that you will not use to your advantage the means you have obtained in order to——"

I interrupted her rudely, for truly I was sore distraught.

"Think not too badly of me," I cried. "I am mean enough, God knows; but being in the company of a good woman has taught me what a man ought to be. No, no. I am a beggar—a beggar I will remain until I win my fortune honourably. Tell me what I can do to serve you?"

"Nothing," she replied, coldly, I thought.

"You will stay here, then?"

"Yes," she replied slowly; "seeing that Mr. Trevisa is so hospitably inclined, I will remain during the night."

"Many nights, my fair lady," cried old Peter gaily. "Treviscoe is very fair demesne, and when my son comes back to-morrow he will make it very pleasant for you. Ah! Roger knows that it is our joy to help all those who are sorrowful or oppressed."

"And is it your desire that I should leave you here?" I asked almost bitterly.

"You are sure you will not claim what is your right?" she asked. "Sure you will not allow Mr. Hendy to establish you at your old home?"

"I have no home," I cried. "If you do not

wish me to stay and serve you, I will ride back to the old place, and, having discharged the servants, I will leave it forever."

"Nay, nay, Roger," cried old Peter, yet I saw that his eyes gleamed with avarice.

Taking no notice of him I waited for the maid Nancy's answer. "Do you wish me to remain near you?" I repeated.

"No," she answered; "but I should like Mr. Hendy to stay for an hour or so if he will."

"Then I am dismissed?" I said rudely, for my heart was very sore; but she made no answer, whereupon I turned on my heel, and a few minutes later was riding towards my old home.

Old Daniel welcomed me with tearful eyes. I might have been away years instead of a few days. And yet, as I considered what had happened since I bade him good-bye, years seemed to have elapsed.

"Is all well, Daniel?" I asked, after many protestations of joy and affection on his part.

"All well, Master Roger; all well. The attorney hath been here much, but I have no complaints to make. The serving-maids will be rejoiced to see 'ee, sur. They say the 'ouse is so lonely as a church when you be out ov et. Aw, sur, I be glad to see 'ee."

I had meant to tell the old man of my plans, but his joy at seeing me tied my tongue. I did not think the servants cared so much for me, and this revelation of their affection made it hard for me to tell them that on the morrow they would have to leave my service and the house which

some of them had learnt to love. As a consequence, I determined to delay the news until the following morning.

This set me thinking again upon all that had happened, and, as well as I could, I tried to understand the whole bearing of the case. I had successfully completed the work I had undertaken, but in so doing I had changed the whole tenor of my life. I had gone to Endellion a woman hater; on returning I knew that I had willingly laid my heart at a woman's feet. I had, on discovering this, abandoned the idea of taking the maid Nancy to Treviscoe, and she had insisted on going. Why? I formed many surmises concerning this, but could think of nothing which satisfied me. The great question, however, was what would become of her? That she had a purpose in going to Trevisa's I did not doubt; but I knew, too, that old Peter would not lightly let her leave his house. Doubtless, also, young Peter had devised many plans for the purpose of fulfilling his heart's desire. I knew he would seek to forge claims whereby he would try and bind Nancy to him. And I had left her at Treviscoe, unprotected and alone. True, I was confident that she could hold her own against both father and son, nevertheless it was dangerous for her to be there.

Then what purpose had she in speaking with the attorney? Why was she anxious for me to leave her? For she was anxious. I called to mind the conversation which took place at Treviscoe, and which I have but meagrely described, and I was certain that she was relieved when I

left her. Did she loathe my presence? Did she scorn me for playing so unmanly a part? Badly as I acted, I was less to be blamed than the men who had employed me. Besides, I had refused to benefit by what I had done. After much thinking, I determined not to leave the neighbourhood. I would watch over her, I would be near to protect her in case of danger.

This was the last thought in my mind before I fell asleep, and all through the night I dreamed I was defending her from powerful enemies, and rescuing her from dire perils.

I was awoke by Daniel knocking at my door.

"You be wanted down-stairs, sur."

"Wanted by whom, Daniel?"

"Some gen'lemen; I doan't knaw who they be. But they say tes very important, sur."

I hastily dressed, and made my way into the library where Daniel at my request had shown my visitors. The moment I entered the room a tall man came towards me, and placing his hand on my shoulder said quietly:

"Roger Trevanion, you are a prisoner."

"A prisoner!" I cried; "for what?"

"Treason."

"Treason! You must be mad!"

"That remains to be proved."

"But at least you can state in something like detail what you mean. What have I done? Wherein have I acted wrongly?"

"It is not for me to answer. I have simply to do my duty. I am instructed to arrest you, and that is my purpose in being here. Doubtless you

will be allowed every opportunity of defending yourself—but with that I have nothing to do. My commands are to take you to Viscount Falmouth in a way befitting your station. Consequently, if you give me your word that you will offer no resistance, you may accompany us to Tregothnan as though you were simply going there on some private business."

I looked around the room, and saw three other men. Evidently the spokeman had brought them for the purpose of taking me by force in case of necessity.

As may be imagined, I was for a few minutes stunned by the course events had taken. I had never dreamed that I was in the slightest danger; I had no idea that I had by any action placed myself under suspicion.

Presently, however, I thought I saw Otho Killigrew's hands at work; I imagined I saw evidence of his busy brain; I became more self-possessed after this, and although I was in sore straits at the thought of leaving Nancy at Treviscoe, I tried to regard the whole matter as a joke.

"Gentlemen," I said, "what grounds there are for apprehending me I have not the ghost of an idea. I, as all my fathers were, am a true supporter of both crown and church. But, of course, you have done right in obeying orders, and I will be ready to go with you in a few minutes. In the mean time I hope you will join me at breakfast."

They willingly fell in with this proposal, but although I tried hard, I could get no information

from them beyond what I have here set down. An hour later I was on my way to Tregothnan, where I was presently informed Hugh Boscawen (Viscount Falmouth) awaited me.

Perhaps there is no lovelier spot anywhere between the Tamar and Land's-end than Tregothnan. It overlooks the Truro River, and all that vast stretch of woodland which surrounds it. Around the house, which is an ancient pile, are rare gardents and parks, where old trees grow, the like of which is not to be found in the fairest county in England. The house was in many parts becoming decayed, and I had heard reports that Huge Boscawen hoped one day to replace it by a more commodious dwelling. But I suspect that, like his father, he was too busy with political schemes to care much for a place justly renowned for many miles around.

I was shown into the library where Huge Boscawen and three other gentlemen sat. Two of these I knew slightly. One was Sir John Grenville and another John Rosecorroch, the forefathers of both of whom fought against Cromwell nearly a century before. My attention, however, was more particularly drawn to Hugh Boscawen, before whom I was especially brought. As I looked at his face I was somewhat reminded of his father, who had died eleven years before, and whom I had twice seen. It called to my mind, also, the stories I had heard about the first viscount. So great was the old man's political zeal that he had caused the arrest of many who held high monarchical principles. Even Sir Rich-

ard Vyvian or Trelowaren, and Mr. Tremain, two of the most renowned and highly respected gentlemen for miles around, did not escape his vigilance. They were friends of his too, but, as he declared, "friendship had nought to do with principles."

The son, however, was not so great a man as his father. He had not the same commanding countenance, neither did his eyes flash forth the same light. On the other hand, the man before whom I stood seemed to be aware that he did not possess a keen, penetrating intellect, and as a consequence was suspicious and very cautious. Report had it, too, that he was very zealous in his service for the King, and would leave no stone unturned in order to carry out his designs. In proof of this, he had, as I have already stated, been engaged in raising an army to resist any forces which the Young Pretender might be able to command.

"Roger Trevanion," he said slowly, "I am sorry to see you here."

"Then it is a pity I should have been brought here, my lord," I said a little hotly, for it went sore against the grain to be brought a prisoner before a man whose family was no nobler than my own.

"Neither would you have been brought here," he replied, "had not the country been threatened by danger, and some, about whose loyalty there should be no doubt, have become renegades.

"You may have received information which has no foundation in fact, my lord," was my reply.

"Nevertheless I should like to ask two questions. First, what right have you to have me brought here a prisoner? and second (providing you can prove your right to arrest whom you please), what are the charges laid against me?"

"Although you have asked your questions with but little respect for my position," he replied hotly, and I saw that his vanity was touched, "I may inform you that by the gracious commands of His Majesty, King George II., it is my duty not only to raise an army in Cornwall wherewith to fight any rebels who may take up arms on the side of the young Pretender, but also to arrest any who give evidence of plotting against the peace of the country, or who in any way favor the claims of the descendants of the Stuarts."

"Admitting that you are commissioned to arrest traitors," I said, "I wish to know why I am included in such a category. This is the first time a Trevanion was ever degraded in such a way, and if I speak hotly, I think there is but little wonder."

"I have treated you leniently, Roger Trevanion," he replied. "Remembering the house to which you belong, I ordered that your arrest should not be made public, and that every consideration should be shown you. Have not my commands been obeyed?"

"As to that," I replied, "I have no complaints to offer. My grievance is that I have been brought here at all; for truly I know of nothing in the nature of treason that can be laid to my charge."

In reply to this Sir John Grenville handed Hugh Boscawen papers which he had been scanning, and on which I gathered the charge against me had been written.

"You shall yourself be the judge whether I, holding the commission I do, have not acted rightly in bringing you here; and I here repeat that nothing but respect for your name has kept me from making the matter public and treating you as others, acting as you have acted, have been treated all over the country. Indeed, I doubt whether I have done right in using the discretionary powers invested in me in such a way as to shield you from public calumny. If your conduct were bruited abroad, the brave fellows who have voluntarily armed themselves to fight for the King all up and down the country would without hesitation throw you into the deepest dungeon beneath Pendennis Castle, even if they did not at once kill you. This he said with, I thought, a sort of peacock pride, which made me, short of temper as I was, itch to make him swallow his words.

"It ill becomes one possessing your powers to condemn a man unheard," I cried hotly. "What is written on that paper I know not; this I know, if there is anything alleged against my loyalty, I will proclaim the man who wrote it a liar."

Hugh Boscawen seemed about to lose his temper, but he was restrained by Sir John Grenville, who seemed to regard me more favorably.

"Very well," he said at length, "I will relate the charges made against you. If you can clear

yourself, well and good; if not, you must prepare for the consequences."

Knowing not what might be written, and fearing Otho Killigrew's cunning (for I felt sure I saw his hand in all this), I foolishly called out for a public trial.

"There is no need at present for a public trial," said Hugh Boscawen, who I could see was prejudged against me. "I am especially commissioned to deal with such as you."

"Up to about fourteen days ago," he continued, "you were known to live a useless and dissolute life. Instead of taking your part in the service of the country, your time was spent in gaming, drinking, and such like foolish pursuits. Do you deny this?"

"I do not," I replied. "I acted as many others are acting. Perchance some of the many sons of your late father behave little differently even to-day. But is there aught that smacks of treason in this?"

"No; but even while living this life, you often let hints drop concerning the danger of our gracious King, and the coming of the young Pretender."

"But never to favour his coming," I replied.

"This taken by itself would have but little meaning," he went on; "but subsequent events cause your words to have grave import."

"What subsequent events, my lord?" I asked hotly.

"About fourteen days ago you left your home, and rode away alone. Will you tell me the object of your journey?"

I was silent, for in truth I cared not to tell this man about the flight of the maid Nancy.

"You are silent. If your journey was honourable, what need is there for seeking to hide it?"

"My lord," I said, "most of us have our secrets. They may be innocent enough, but still we do not care to have them made public property."

"Ordinarily that may be true," he replied; "but remembering the charge against you, I shall require you to state why you left Trevanion."

"For no traitorous purpose, my lord, that I will swear. My reason for leaving home had nothing whatever to do with the coming of the Pretender."

"Out of your own mouth I will convict you," he replied. "Did you not tell Colman Killigrew, of Endellion, that you came to see him for the very purpose of seeking to help the enemy of the King?"

The words came upon me like a thunderbolt. I saw now that my position was more dangerous than I had conceived.

"Believe me, my lord," I cried, "I had another purpose in going to Endellion. I, hearing that Killigrew favored Charles Stuart, used that as a means whereby I might enter his house."

"You told him a lie."

"It was necessary in order to accomplish that on which I had set my mind."

"You admit telling a lie to him. How do I know you would not tell a lie to me?"

"But it is well known that the Killigrews are enemies of George II.," I cried.

Hugh Boscawen smiled scornfully. Not great of intellect, he nevertheless sought to impress me with his erudition.

"I know that the Killigrews pretend this," he replied, "but only for the purpose of serving the King. It is true that the family hath nearly died out, and beyond this one branch there are no representatives; but they have always supported king and crown."

"Tom Killigrew was Master of Revels of Charles II.," I replied hotly, "and the family have always sworn allegiance to the Stuart race."

"I am not here to bandy words with you, Roger Trevanion," he said; "the question is, Did you or did you not offer your services to Colman Killigrew? Did you not offer to help to raise an army against the king? Did you not say that the people called Methodists were papists in disguise, and desired to bring back the Catholic religion, and again establish high monarchical powers?"

Again I was silent, for in truth I had no answer to give.

"I am waiting for you to speak," he continued presently.

"I have no answer to make beyond again saying that this was a mere subterfuge on my part to establish a footing in the house."

"Why wished you to establish a footing in the house?"

"This also must remain my secret for the present," was my answer.

"I tell you you are making a rope for your own neck," said Sir John Grenville. "Tell the truth, lad; we are not thine enemies."

"I will give you one more chance," said Hugh Boscawen. "You have refused to answer the other questions I have asked, will you answer this? There is a man known to hate the house of Hanover, who wanders up and down the country in many disguises. Yesterday he was a priest of the Catholic order, to-day he is a hermit living in cells, to-morrow he will be a wandering minstrel and tale-teller; the day after he will meet with men of high degree and converse with them as with equals. He is known as Uncle Anthony, as Father Anthony, as Sir Anthony Tregarrick. Ah! I see your lips tremble! Well, this man is one of the most dangerous men in the country; he has gone to France, and has had secret converse with him who is desirous of leading the rebels to battle; he is commissioned to arouse a rebellious feeling in Cornwall, and he hath been doing this by many underhanded means. Answer me this: Have you met this man disguised as a traveling tale-teller? Have you allowed him to ride on your horse? Have you had secret converse with him in one of his many hiding-places?"

"For no seditious purpose, my lord."

"But you have had converse with him?"

"Yes, but my conversation hath had naught to do with the coming of Charles."

"That may be proved. For a week past I have used many means to discover this man's whereabouts. If he is taken he will assuredly die.

You were in his company not many days ago. Do you know where he is now?"

It seemed as though the fates were against me. Truth was, I had, in spite of everything, learned to love this lonely old man. If I told all the truth I should be the means of his death, so I again held my peace.

"You know where he is," said Sir John Grenville, who had several times advised Hugh Boscawen as to the questions he should ask me. "Tell us where you saw him last and it shall be well for you."

"Never have I spoken one word with the travelling droll about the affairs of the nation," I replied; "and I defy any man to prove that I have used any endeavours to injure my king."

"But we have witnesses!"

"Then let your witnesses appear!" I cried hotly, for I thought I was safe in saying this.

"They shall appear, Roger Trevanion," said Hugh Boscawen; "they shall appear," whereupon he signaled for a serving-man to attend him. When the man came, Hugh Boscawen spoke to him in low tones, and immediately after we were left alone again.

"You say no man hath heard you proclaim against our gracious king?" said Hugh Boscawen to me.

"No man," I replied.

No sooner had I spoken than the door opened, and Otho Killigrew and his brother Clement entered the room. Upon this my heart fluttered much, for I knew Otho to be as cunning as the

devil, and as merciless. All the same I met his gaze boldly, for I determined now we had met in this way that it should go hard with him. But I did not know then the man with whom I had to deal.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OTHO KILLIGREW'S VICTORY.

Both Otho Killigrew and his brother Clement bowed courteously to Hugh Boscawen. Both, too, appeared perfectly at ease in his presence.

"I have asked you to come here," said Viscount Falmouth to them blandly, "in order to substantiate the charge you made last night against Roger Trevanion."

"I should have been glad to have escaped the duty," replied Otho, speaking slowly as was his wont, "but as a loyal subject of our gracious Majesty, George II., whom may God preserve, I could do no other."

"You could not if your charges are true," was Falmouth's rejoinder. "The name of Killigrew hath long been associated with the best life of the county. I remember that the coat-of-arms of Falmouth, with which town I am so closely associated by name and interest, is taken from that of the Killigrews. Let me see, your arms are those of the Devonshire Killigrews, and are *gules, three mascles or.* It pleases me much that your branch of that ancient and honourable family remain loyal,

especially as evil reports have been rife concerning you."

"My father hath allowed reports to go forth uncontradicted," replied Otho; "he found that by so doing he could best serve his king. And as a further proof of the loyalty of our family, we have at the first opportunity laid information before you concerning this man, Roger Trevanion."

"Will you be good enough to repeat here what you stated last night concerning him, so that he may have every opportunity of defending himself?"

I cannot here put down in exact words the story which Otho Killigrew told, for in truth I cannot do justice to the subtlety of his mind, nor describe his power of twisting actions and statements which were most innocent into what seemed definite proof that I was a most determined enemy of the king. As I listened my power of speech seemed for a time to be gone, and I could do nothing but stare first at him, and then at Hugh Boscawen as though I was a born fool. I saw, too, on consideration, that my actions had laid me open to such an accusation. I *had* pretended to be a papist; I *had* declared myself to be in favor of the return of Charles the Pretender; I *had* promised old Colman Killigrew to obtain recruits to fight against the King. Moreover, if I defended myself I must tell the whole miserable story of my bargain with Peter Trevisa, and then drag in the name of the maid who became constantly dearer to me. Thus when Hugh Boscawen asked

me if I had aught to say, I was for a few moments stupidly silent.

"Look you," said Sir John Grenville, "you can at least answer plain questions. Did you, on going to Endellion, tell Master Colman Killigrew that you were a papist, and that hearing he was in the favour of the Pretender's return, you desired to offer him your service? Yes, or no?"

"That is true, Sir John," I blurted out; "but I only used this as a means whereby I might be able to enter the house."

"But why did you wish to enter the house?"

Again I was silent, for in truth I could not make up my mind to tell the whole truth. I knew that Otho Killigrew longed to know my real reason for coming to Endellion; longed to know what interest I had in the maid, Nancy Molesworth, and was doubtless using every means in his power to try and find out where I had taken her. I was sure, moreover, that did I once begin to tell my story, I should probably let words fall that might give him a knowledge of her whereabouts, and then she would be quickly in his power again. But besides all this, I had given my promise to Peter Trevisa, before undertaking the mission of which I had become so heartily ashamed, that I would tell no man concerning it. At the time I had made the promise I had seen no danger, and had any one told me two days before that any of the Killigrews of Endellion would dare to charge me with treason against the king, I would have laughed at him. Yet such was the

case, and innocent as I was of all traitorous purposes, I could see no loophole for my escape.

"You are silent in relation to Sir John's query," said Hugh Boscawen, who did not seem to relish any one asking questions but himself. "Let me ask you one in Master Otho Killigrew's presence: Did you or did you not promise to try and get recruits to try and fight against the king?"

"What I said had no meaning in it," I replied. "The king hath no truer or more loyal subject than Roger Trevanion."

"If you are a true and loyal subject, you will be glad to give information whereby all traitors can be brought to book," replied Boscawen. "I mentioned just now the name of one who, when you were with him, was known as a traveling droll, by the name of Uncle Anthony. As I told you, he is the most dangerous man in the county. Will you tell us what you know of him?"

"I know Uncle Anthony as a welcome guest of Colman Killigrew," I replied. "When first I went to Endellion I was attacked by Otho Killigrew's brother, and they would perchance have done me harm but for the interference of the old man to whom you refer. As soon as they saw that he was my companion they received me kindly. When I entered the house I perceived that he was treated with great respect—almost as an honoured guest."

"I may say," replied Otho calmly, "that this is true. My father had doubts concerning him, but would do nothing against him until he was absolutely sure of his guilt. Knowing of the reports

circulated about our family he came to our house and was received kindly, as we try to receive all visitors. It was during his last visit that my father's suspicions concerning him were confirmed."

"Then," cried I, "why did you not arrest him?"

"I may also say," went on Otho, without seeming to notice me, "that by some secret means unknown to us, he left on the same night he arrived with Roger Trevanion. But even had he stayed he would have been safe."

"Why?" asked Sir John Grenville.

"Because," replied Otho, "he entered our house as a guest,—as a humble one, it is true, but still as a guest, and therefore we could take no steps against him. When gone, however, and we had been able to verify our doubts concerning him, I deemed it right to mention the fact of his visit to my Lord Falmouth."

"But he hath long been known to me as a dangerous man," cried Hugh Boscawen.

"We live far away from centers of information at Endellion," replied Otho humbly.

"And you say that Roger Trevanion knows where this man can be found?"

"I know that he has been the companion of the man," replied Otho, "and that he can probably tell where he now resides."

"I do not know," I replied, thinking that he might have removed from the lonely chapel.

"When saw you him last, and where?" asked Hugh Boscawen.

Again I hesitated. Ought I to tell of the old man's whereabouts? I could not see into the depths of Otho Killigrew's mind, but I felt assured that he had some purpose in bringing in Uncle Anthony's name. Did he desire to punish him for assisting Mistress Nancy Molesworth's escape? Did he think I might be led to speak of him and thus tell of my purpose in coming to Endellion. I was sure that this puzzled him sorely. Was it to find out this that he had braved the danger of visiting Tregothnan, the home of the man whose joy it was to find out treason and punish it? I knew next to nothing of the old story-teller. He might or might not be a political meddler. I was sure, however, that he was shrewd beyond common, and would have friends unknown to me. He had many hiding-places too, and in spite of his wound it was not likely that he would stay at the hermit's chapel.

Then another thought struck me. If it was the purpose of Hugh Boscawen to arrest Uncle Anthony, the old man would surely be aware of it, and any information I might be able to give would effect but little. On the other hand, if he were told that Otho Killigrew had laid information concerning him, the keen old recluse would not hesitate to make out a bad case against the Killigrews, and, in spite of the part they were playing, would pull their mask aside, and show the Viscount their real sentiments. I therefore determined to speak freely.

"When I last saw Uncle Anthony," I replied, "he was lying in a lonely chapel in the parish of

St. Mawgan. He had been wounded by Otho Killigrew for seeking to defeat his evil purposes."

"What evil purposes?"

"I will let the old droll answer that, when you have taken him," I replied; "but it had naught to do with treason against the king."

"Had it to do with the purpose for which you say you went to Endellion?" asked Sir John Grenville.

"It had, Sir John."

"Then let me tell you this," said the baronet, "it will be well for you if you will tell us the reason for which you took this journey and the event which led to this charge being made against you."

At that moment I turned and caught the eye of Otho Killigrew; and from the eagerness with which he looked at me, I knew that he longed for me to answer Sir John's question. Was there something lurking behind of which I had no knowledge? Had Peter Trevisa and his son told me everything when he asked me to bring the maid, Nancy Molesworth, to them? Had Otho Killigrew come to the conclusion that I might help him to find out some valuable secrets? During the time he had been accusing me of treason, he had never once hinted at the truth. Did he know where Mistress Nancy was? And more than this, might not one of his reasons for placing himself in danger in order to cause my arrest be that he feared me? I remembered now that I knew nothing of the maid Nancy's life

prior to her coming to Endellion, and I reproached myself for not asking her.

All this flashed through my mind in a second, and determined me more than ever to let drop no hint as to the truth. Possibly I should be doing the maid I loved incalculable injury by so doing, for I knew that Otho Killigrew was merciless.

"There be certain things, Sir John, which a gentleman may not tell," I replied. "You will know as well as I that the Trevanions have more than once suffered rather than endanger the fair fame of a lady. I can only give you my word of honour that I never dreamed of treason, and that if it become necessary I am willing to take up arms for the king."

"Methinks he tries to make me out a liar," replied Otho Killigrew, speaking more quickly than was his wont; "I will be willing to withdraw my charges if he will make it clear that what he has just said is true. We be all gentlemen here, and not one of us would let the fair name of a lady suffer."

By speaking thus he confirmed my suspicions, and I still held my peace. Possibly Hugh Boscawen and Sir John Grenville, in their over-zeal for the king, their minds poisoned by the cunning of Otho Killigrew, might commit me for public trial, but I did not fear that. I feared rather that by speaking I should give Killigrew a power which he did not now possess, even though my knowledge was meager in extreme.

After this I was asked many more questions, some of them concerning Uncle Anthony, and

others about matters which seemed to me trivial beyond measure; but I was not able to assure my judges of my innocence, and I was at length condemned to be imprisoned at Launceston Castle until such time as I could be publicly tried.

Now this was sore grief to me, for I should thus leave the maid Nancy in the hands of Peter Trevisa and his son, or, what would be worse, at the mercy of Otho Killigrew. It is true there seemed but little danger that Peter Trevisa would play into Otho's hands, but I had many doubts.

"My lord," I said, as soon as I was able to collect my thoughts "as you know, I have been away from Trevanion for many days. May I pray your clemency in so far that I may be allowed to return for a few hours in order to consult my attorney and make other simple arrangements concerning my servants?"

"This shall be granted," replied Hugh Boscawen. "It would ill beseem that one of your name should be treated with lack of due courtesy. You shall, therefore, ride to your house as a free man might; you shall also be allowed to see your attorney. Furthermore, there is no need that for the present the knowledge of the charges laid against you should become public."

At this I knew not what to think, for I felt myself as it were in a network of difficulties, and knew not whether Hugh Boscawen desired to be my friend or enemy. All the same I determined to make the most of my opportunities. I immediately sent a message to Lawyer Hendy, therefore, asking him to meet me at Trevanion, and

tried to think of means whereby I could tell Mistress Nancy of the fate which had befallen me, or, better still, to see her. Nothing, however, occurred to me on my journey home; indeed I was kept busy talking with my guardsmen, who, although they treated me respectfully, watched me closely. Once I thought of attempting flight, but I reflected that such a course would be unwise, even if it were possible. Besides, being unarmed, I was very nearly helpless in such a matter.

I had not long returned to Trevanion when Lawyer Hendy came. He listened very attentively to my recital of my experiences, but made no comment thereon. Instead he sat quibbling the end of his riding-whip, like one in deep thought.

"What is the meaning of this?" I asked presently.

"I cannot tell—yet."

"You think Otho Killigrew has some deep-laid purpose?

"Possibly. Possibly he is only inspired by a spirit of revenge. But enough of that for the present. What do you wish done while you are away at—that is, from home?"

"Before I deal with that," I cried, "I wish to know what happened at Treviscoe last night?"

"Last night? Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"No."

"But Mistress Nancy wished to speak with you, and you stayed with her. What had she to say?"

"It is not for me to tell you."

I ground my teeth with impatience. "Then she told you nothing of her history or purposes?" I asked.

"I did not say so," replied the attorney grimly.

"But she did not know of the danger in which I stood?"

"Yes."

"What!"

"Do not misunderstand. She knew that you were in danger, because she knew Otho Killigrew; but she knew nothing, suspected nothing of the course events would take."

"I should like her to know what has happened to me?" I said, "otherwise she will think I am unwilling to render her further service. Would you take a letter to her? I am allowed to write letters."

"I would if I could, but I cannot."

"Cannot, why?"

"Because I do not know where she is?"

"What do you mean, Hendy?" I cried. "You left her last night at Treviscoe!"

"I mean, Master Roger Trevanion," said the attorney slowly, but speaking every word plainly, "that I do not know where the lady Mistress Nancy Molesworth is."

"Then get to know through Peter Trevisa."

"He doth not know!"

"How?" I cried, now truly amazed.

"Because she is gone, and Peter Trevisa is as ignorant of her whereabouts as you are."

"Then she is in Otho Killigrew's hands."

"I do not think so."

"Your reason for that?" I cried.

"Because there are no evidences of it. She left Treviscoe last night, not many hours after I left, at least such is Peter Trevisa's opinion. He sent for me early this morning, and on my arrival I found him like one demented. The maid had crept out of the house with her servant, and had themselves saddled the horses and rode them away."

"And left no traces behind?"

"Not a trace."

"But did she hold any conversation with Peter Trevisa after you had left?"

The lawyer gave a start. "I had not thought of that," he said hastily.

"Look you, Hendy," I cried, for the time forgetting that in an hour or so I should be on my way to Launceston jail, "I have puzzled my brains sorely concerning this. Do you know the history of the business?"

"I think so; yes. Trevisa has been obliged to tell me."

"Has he told you why he wished the maid brought to Treviscoe?"

"No—that is, beyond what he told you."

"You mean that young Peter had fallen in love with her?"

"That is it."

"But that cannot be all; he would never wish her brought to Treviscoe unless he had some powerful reason to urge to the maid for the course he had taken."

"I think you are right."

"Have you any idea what the reason is?"

"No."

"Do you think he tried its effects last night?"

Mr. Hendy was silent.

"It might have miscarried, you know," I continued eagerly; but the old attorney spoke no word, instead he walked to and fro the room as though cogitating deeply.

An hour later I was on horseback again, and proceeded under the charge of four men towards Launceston, a town situated on the extreme borders of the county, where at that time one of the county jails was situated.

CHAPTER XIX.

LAUNCESTON CASTLE.

Concerning my journey to Launceston there is but little need to describe in detail. Except that it was long and wearisome it calls but for few remarks. On our way thither we passed through Bodmin, where was a jail, and where the assizes were periodically held. I asked why I was not imprisoned there, seeing it was so much nearer Trevanion than Launceston, and would thus save a long journey, but the men in whose custody I was made no reply. Indeed we did not stay at Bodmin at all. Instead we made our way towards the Bodmin moors, and passed through one of the dreariest regions it has ever been my lot to see. The journey through the night, from

Wadebridge to Roche Rock, was awesome enough, but it was cheerful compared with our wanderings through that waste land which lies between the town of Bodmin and the village of Lewannick, a distance of something like twenty miles. Besides, in the ride to Roche Rock I was excited, I breathed the air of romance and adventure; a young girl who I was even then learning to love rode by my side, and I had but little time to think of the lonely district through which we rode. Now I was a prisoner, my destination was one of the county jails, where I should have to lie until such time as I should be tried for treason. All this made the bare brown moors look more desolate. We had to ride slowly, too, for there were innumerable bogs and quagmires, and no proper roads had been made. One spot especially impressed me. It was that known as Dozmary Pool, about which numberless wild tales had been told. Legend had it that it had no bottom, and that Tregeagle, about whose terrible fate all the children in Cornwall had heard, was condemned to scoop out its dark waters with a limpet shell in order to atone for his sins. Of the legend I thought but little, but the supposed scene of his trials was enough to strike terror into the bravest heart. The pool is as black as ink, and is situated in the midst of uninhabited moorland. Early spring as it was, the wind howled dismally across the weary waste, and my custodians shuddered as they rode along, for truly it required little imagination to believe that the devil must delight to hold his revels there. I have since

thought that if I had played upon the superstitious fears of my guards I should have had but little difficulty in effecting my escape.

After we had left the Bodmin Moors, we came upon those situated in the parish of Altarnun, and these were, if possible, less cheerful than the other, for on our right hand rose a ghastly-looking hill on which nothing grew, and whose gray, forbidding rocky peaks made us long to get into civilized regions again. By and by, however, after passing through a hamlet called Bolven Tor we came to Altarnum, where we rested for nearly two hours, and then made our way towards Launceston.

It was quite dark when we entered the town, so I was able to form but little conception of it. Even in the darkness, however, I could see the dim outline of a huge building lifting its dark head into the night sky.

"Launceston Castle!" remarked one of my companions.

"Am I to stop there?" I asked. "Is it a prison?"

"I don't know exactly," was the reply; "you'll find out soon enough for your own comfort, I dare say."

Upon this we came up to a high wall which was covered with ivy, and behind which great trees grew. The sight of the walls was oppressive enough, but the trees looked like old friends, and reminded me of the great oaks which grew around Trevanion.

"Here's a door," cried one, "let's knock."

Whereupon the fellow knocked loudly, and soon afterwards I heard the sound of footsteps.

"What want you?" said a voice.

"A prisoner," was the reply.

"Take him to the lock-up," was the answer. "This is not the place for constables to bring drunken men."

"If it please you, we be not constables," replied one of my companions. "We have come from my Lord Falmouth, with a prisoner of quality, and I carry important papers."

"But it is not for me to examine them," replied the voice, "and Master Hugh Pyper is gone to a supper to-night at South Petherwin, and God only knows when he will be back. Moreover, when he comes I much doubt whether he will be fit to read such papers."

"In Heaven's name, why?"

"Because Sir Geoffry Luscombe keeps the best wine in the county, and because whenever Master Hugh Pyper goes there he thinks he is bound by conscience not to leave until he has drunk until he can drink no more."

"And this Master Hugh Pyper is the constable and keeper of the jail and castle? I know he is, for such is the name written on my papers."

"Well, I will open the door," grumbled the man from within, "but I wish you had chosen some other time. To-morrow morning, up to twelve o'clock, Master Pyper will be asleep, and from then until late to-morrow night he will give no man a civil word. You say your prisoner is a man of quality?"

"That he is."

"All the same, I shall have to put him into a common jail until Master Pyper is able to read what you have brought."

We passed through the door as he spoke, and the man who had been speaking, and who held a lantern in his hand, looked at me keenly.

"I wish gentlefolk would keep out of trouble," he grumbled; "if they did, I should keep out of trouble. Master Pyper is always in a villainous temper whenever a man of quality is made prisoner. But come this way."

I expected to be taken to the castle itself, but in this I was mistaken. South of this ancient pile, and away from the main structure, I noticed a long low building, towards which I was led. The man who held the lantern gave a whistle, whereupon another fellow appeared on the scene.

"All quiet, Jenkins?" he asked.

"Oal gone to slaip, sur. They've been braave and noisy. but they be oal right now."

"You have an empty cell?"

"Iss, Mr. Lethbridge, there es wawn."

"Open it."

A few seconds later I had entered an evil-smelling hole, which as far as I could see was about eight feet square and five feet high. On one side was a heap of straw, in another a bench.

"Are you hungry?" asked the man called Lethbridge.

"I was before I entered this hole," I replied. "I cannot eat here."

"There have been as good as you who have eaten there," he replied. Then, after hesitating a second, he went on, "You would like to pay for a decent supper I expect."

"For the whole lot of you if we can have a clean place," was my answer.

Mr. Lethbridge looked around. "Every man is innocent until he is proved guilty," he remarked sententiously, "and thus before trial every prisoner is allowed certain privileges. Come back again, sir."

I therefore accompanied him to what seemed like a tower, situated southwest of the gate at which he had entered.

"This is the Witch's Tower," remarked Mr. Lethbridge. "A witch was once burnt here, but she will not disturb us. John Jenkins, you know where to get a good supper. The best you know!" The man gave a grin and walked away in evident good humour.

"John Jenkins is always willing to do little errands," remarked Mr. Lethbridge, "and he only expects a trifle. The people to whom he's gone will send a good supper and not be unreasonable. Do not be downhearted, sir."

Bad as was my condition, I was cheered at the thought of a good meal which might be eaten amidst clean surroundings, and although the room under the Witch's Tower was not cheerful, it was dry and clean. A few minutes later a decent supper was brought, of which we all partook heartily. Mr. Lethbridge was the best trencherman among us, although he assured us at starting

that having had supper he would be able to eat nothing. The amount of wine he consumed, too, was astounding, especially as he was constantly telling us that unlike his master, Hugh Pyper, the Governor of the Castle, he was but an indifferent drinker. Presently, however, when both he and the men who had escorted me from Trevanion had becom fairly drunk, I was informed that I might stay in the Witch's Tower for the night, while they would go to Mr. Lethbridge's lodge and drink my health in some more wine that they would order in my name.

I was glad to be rid of them, for dreary and lonely as the Witch's Tower was, Jenkins had brought some straw for me to lie on, and I felt very tired. I could not sleep, however. I had too many things to think about, for in truth the events of the last few days were beyond my comprehension. I was weary with wondering, too. In spite of myself I had become enmeshed in a network of mysteries, and, seemingly without reason, my very life might be in danger. But more than all, I was ignorant concerning the fortunes of the maid Nancy Molesworth, and I would have given up willingly the thing dearest to me on earth to know of her safety.

I will not try to write down all my anxieties, and hopes, and fears. I will not try to tell of the mad feelings which possessed me, of the wild projects I dreamed about, or of the love which grew hourly more ardent, and yet more hopeless. Those who have read this history will, if the fires of youth run in their veins, or if they remember

the time when they were young and buoyant, know what I longed for, and what I suffered.

The following morning Master Lethbridge came to me and informed me that my companions of the previous day had started on their journey home, and that in remembrance of my generosity of the previous night,—with a hint concerning his hopes of future favours,—he intended braving the governor's anger, and would allow me to occupy the Witch's Tower until such time as Master Hugh Pyper should be inclined to speak with me. He also assured me that he would allow me to walk about within the precincts of the castle walls, but warned me against any attempt at escape, as warders were constantly on the watch and would not hesitate to shoot me dead.

Although I did not believe this, I could not at that time see the wisdom in trying to escape, so I wandered round the castle grounds thinking over my condition and over my prospects. It is true I had not seen Master Hugh Pyper, the governor of the Castle, but it was not difficult to see that he was somewhat lax of discipline. As for that matter, however, the place was, I suspect, no better and no worse governed than many other county prisons throughout the country. The jail itself, however, was a wretched, noisome, evil-smelling place, where the convicted and unconvicted suffered alike, and I dreaded the thought of being removed from the Witch's Tower and placed in the common prison. I discovered that I might possibly have to stay two months in the place before my trial came off, as the spring

assizes were often delayed as late as the end of May, or even the beginning of June. It was, therefore, a matter of considerable anxiety to me as to the kind of man Hugh Pyper might prove to be, for on him would depend my well-being. I remembered that my father had spoken of Sir Hugh Pyper, the grandfather of the present governor, who after the restoration of the monarchy was rewarded for his good service in the cause of the King by a grant of the castle as lessee, and was made constable and keeper of the jail. I assumed that the position was hereditary, and doubtless the present castle governor would be invested with large powers.

As to the place itself, apart from the unhealthy condition of the jail, it is fair, and long to be remembered. The castle stands on a fine eminence, and is surrounded by several acres of land. Under ordinary circumstances I could have wished for no more pleasant place of residence. The spring leaves were bursting everywhere, and every plant and shrub gave promise that in a few days the country-side, which I could plainly see from the Witch's Tower, would be a scene of much beauty. My mind and heart, however, were so full of anxiety that I fretted and fumed beyond measure, and panted for freedom as a thirsty horse pants for water. I wanted to search for Nancy, to be assured of her safety, and to fight for her if needs be. I longed, too, to solve the many problems which faced me, not by quietly musing in solitude, but by daring action in the world outside. For unlike some men, I can think

best when I have work to do. I cannot plan anything from the beginning. My mind is so ordered that I desire only to decide definitely on the first steps to be taken in any enterprise and then to be guided by circumstances.

I was brought before Master Hugh Pyper on the evening of the day after my imprisonment, and at a glance I saw that he corresponded with the picture I had drawn of him from Lethbridge's description. That he fed well and drank much wine no one could fail to see. He was a big, burly man, too, and I thought not of a very cautious nature. The papers which had been signed by Viscount Falmouth lay before him as I entered the room where he sat, and which he had been evidently reading.

"Roger Trevanion," he cried, "I am sorry to see you here. Why, man alive, can't you see how foolish it is to oppose the King! God is always on the side of the kings, man, always. That's what my grandfather, Sir Hugh, always said, and that's what I always say. Stick to the reigning monarch! I knew your father, too. A man with a proud temper, but a good fellow withal. He could drink well, could your father—drink all night—and then be as merry as a lark in the morning. I can't; I must have six good hours of sleep after as many with the bottle, and woe betide the man who disturbs me! but after that I am as gay as your father was. Now then, what have you been doing?"

"Nothing wrong," I replied quietly.

"But Boscawen shows a clear case against you.

If all this is proved at the assizes, by Gad, your neck will stretch."

Upon this I spoke freely. I told Pyper that I was guilty of no treason, that circumstances seemed against me, but that King George had no truer subject than I. I made him believe me, too, for his manner became quite sympathetic.

"The Killigrews of Endellion!" he cried, when I had finished my history. "Ah, lad, they are as deep as Dozmary Pool and as full of evil. No one knows what they are. Some say they are no better than a gang of robbers, others that they are angels of light. One report hath it that they are plotting treason against the King, another that they spend their time in finding out traitors and bringing them to book. Sir John Dingle believes that they intend sailing with the wind. If the Pretender's cause fails, as doubtless it will, for England will have no high monarchy and no popery, these Killigrews will put in a strong plea for reward; but if this young Charles ousts King George, which God forbid, then they will prove that they have raised an army for him. But you can't catch 'em, Roger Trevanion. Did you ever catch eels? I have; but it's slippery work, slippery work. You must sand your hands well, and then they are so slimy that they will slide through your fingers."

"I believe all that, and I know there is a *prima facie* case against me. But I dare not tell all." This I said hesitatingly, for I hardly knew my man.

"Daren't tell all; what do you mean?"

"Well, it is true I went to Endellion; true that I said many of the things laid to my charge, but my visit there had nothing to do with political matters."

"What then? A woman?"

I was silent, and I felt the hot blood rush to my face.

"A woman! ha! ha!" laughed Pyper. "But did you tell my Lord Falmouth of this?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Because I dared not, I feared to do her harm."

"But who is she? Tell me the history of the business. Look you, Trevanion, I am sorry you are here; I know your family—who doesn't?—and I should like to see you well out of this trouble. You see I am not treating you like a prisoner."

"I can tell you a little, but a very little," I replied. "Perhaps I ought to tell you more than I do; but I am bound by promises. I went to Endellion to carry away a lady from the house."

"By Gad, you did! and you succeeded, you dog?"

"I did."

"Who is the lady?"

Thereupon I told Pyper all I dared: enough, as I thought, to explain the position in which I was placed, but not enough to break my faith with Trevisa or to be of any service to the Killigrews.

"But why did you seek to take the maid away?"

"That I cannot tell at present," I replied.

He was thoughtful for a second, and I began to

see that Hugh Pyper had more brains that I had given him credit for; then he said:

"And the name of this maid, Roger Trevanion?"

I hesitated for a second.

"I think I know," he went on. "Is she not the child of Godfrey Molesworth?"

"Did you know him?" I asked

"Know him!" he cried, "well. Why the woman he married was some relation of the Killigrews, that is why old Colman became guardian of the child. The mother was Irish. Godfrey Molesworth went to Ireland to marry her."

"Was she a Catholic then?"

"Yes. There was much talk about it at the time, for Godfrey was a strong Protestant."

My heart gave a leap, for I remembered some words which had dropped from the lips of the Irish priest at Padstow. But I dared not mention them to Pyper, they might have serious issues and explain much. They must be pondered carefully, too.

After this, many more questions were asked and answered, but they led to nothing; neither need I write them down here. At the same time my further conversation with this florid-looking old governor of Launceston Castle revealed the fact that, in spite of his freedom in eating and drinking, he was a keen observer of men and things, and was not easily deceived.

"I must keep you here, Roger Trevanion," he said presently, "for I have my duty to perform; but I will make your stay here as pleasant as pos-

sible. You shall not stay in the ordinary prison, but shall continue to occupy the Witch's Tower. As far as food is concerned, too, you shall be well supplied, even though I have to send it from my own table. But I am doubtful as to the future, lad."

"You think judge and jury will find me guilty?"

"It will be to the Killigrews' interest to be against you, I am afraid. As far as I can see, only one thing can save you."

"And that?" I cried eagerly.

"That the maid Nancy Molesworth shall appear on your behalf, and tell the truth concerning you."

"I do not know where she is."

"But you can find out. You know where you took her."

"No. She has left the place to which I took her, and no one knows whither she has gone."

He looked at me keenly for some seconds, as if trying to find out if there was anything behind the words I had spoken. Presently he said: "If I were you I would engage the keenest lawyer in Cornwall to find out, and so prepare a case."

"I have done that. I suppose he will be allowed to visit me?"

"Yes, I shall allow you to have visitors. But mind, my lad, I can allow no trying to escape. You are a dead man if you do!"

As I sat in the Witch's Tower afterwards, I pondered over what he had said. In truth, my case was more serious than I had thought. I saw that did I not speak out boldly my life was in im-

minent danger, for the King was very bitter against those who appeared to side with the Pretender. To say that I longed for freedom would be but faintly to describe my feelings! Yet what could I do?

After I had been a prisoner for some time, I determined to try and escape. Every day the conviction grew upon me that the maid Nancy needed me. In my dreams I saw her hiding from her pursuers, I saw her at the mercy of the Killigrews, and when I awoke I thought I heard her crying to me to come and help her.

As the days went by, too, I became nervous. Lying alone in the silence of the Witch's Tower, and remembering all the stories I heard from Lethbridge concerning the life of the woman who had been burnt there, I became the prey of morbid fears. Often at night I thought I saw her lifting her skinny hands out of the fire which consumed her and fancied I could hear her dying cries. I, who had laughed at foolish superstitions and prided myself on my firm nerves, shuddered each day at the thought of the coming night, and when night came I suffered the torments of the lost.

And yet I dared not ask to leave the tower, for if I did I should doubtless be put in the common jail. Here not only would my surroundings be filthy and the atmosphere sickening, but I should be thrown into contact with the other prisoners.

Added to this, my chances of escape would be much lessened, for the place was on the whole strictly guarded. Whereas while at the Witch's

Tower I was comparatively unmolested, I had a view of the world outside, and I thought I saw means whereby I might, if fortunate, obtain my liberty. To effect this I should have to bribe one of the jailers, and my plans would take several days to carry out. Nevertheless, if there was any chance of getting away from Launceston Castle, the fact of my occupying the dismal chamber I have mentioned gave it me.

I therefore determined to suffer all the ghastly spectres of the mind which came to me during the night rather than seek to exchange my prison.

When I had been at Launceston jail about three weeks I received information that a man was about to visit me. Wondering as to whom it might be, I awaited his coming eagerly. At first I thought it might be Mr. Hendy, the attorney, but I quickly discovered my mistake. It was not the lawyer's figure that I saw coming across the castle yard towards me. For the moment, indeed, I could not make out who my visitor was. He looked like a fairly prosperous yeoman, and was, as far as I could see, a stranger to me. But this was only for a minute. I quickly penetrated the evident disguise, and felt sure that the man was Otho Killigrew.

CHAPTER XX.

I ESCAPE FROM THE WITCH'S TOWER.

As may be imagined, the sight of Otho Killigrew set me a-wondering much, for I knew he would not come to see me save for important reasons. Doubtless he fancied I was in possession of some knowledge which he hoped I might impart; but I hoped that by being careful I might lead him to betray more to me than I should communicate to him.

I therefore received him civilly, hard as it was to do so, but I saw that he lacked his usual self-possession. He spoke more quickly than was his wont, and his mouth twitched as though he were nervous and much wrought upon.

"Trevanion," he said, when we were presently left alone, "we have been fighting a battle which I have won."

"I thought so until I saw you coming towards me just now," was my reply as I watched him closely.

He flushed angrily, for he saw that I had divined his motives; but he stuck to his guns.

"Which I have won," he repeated. "When the assizes come off I shall have to appear against you. I have only to repeat the evidence I gave to Boscawen, and you will swing."

"Possibly yes, probably no," was my reply.

"What do you mean?"

"Look you," I said boldly; "when I set out for

Endellion I imagined the kind of men I had to contend with; when I entered your house I took the measure of your whole tribe. I knew that the Killigrews of Falmouth, before that branch of the family died out, were honest loyal gentlemen, but I saw that the Killigrews of Endellion were——" I stopped.

"What?" he asked.

"I will reserve my opinion," I replied; "but I can tell you this, I did not go like a lamb to the slaughter."

"It seems to me that you did," he replied with a sneer. "True, you seemed to win for a time, and you succeeded in taking away my affianced wife. But what is the result of it? You are in the county jail for treason, and the hangman's rope is dangling over your head."

"As far as that is concerned," I replied jauntily, for I determined to put a bold face on the matter, "my neck is as safe as yours, as you will find out in good time. As for the maid, she is where you will never get her."

"Do not be too sure," he replied; "we have not earned the title of sleuthhounds for nothing."

My breath came freer as he said this. I believed that he was ignorant of the maid Nancy's whereabouts. Probably he had come to me in order to obtain information.

"Moreover," he went on, "you are here on a very grave charge. Unless it is to my interest to do otherwise, I shall certainly give evidence against you at the assizes, and nothing can save you from death."

"Man alive," I replied, "you do not hold the destinies of the world in your hand. There be men born of women besides Otho Killigrew."

"But none that can save you."

"I have no doubt but that you are a clever fellow, Killigrew," I said; "but omniscience belongeth not to man."

"Well, who can save you?"

"Those who *will* save me at the proper time."

"Uncle Anthony cannot give evidence; he dare not show himself," replied Otho; "neither will Nancy. She would thereby frustrate all her desires."

Little as he might suspect it, he had by this answer revealed something of his mind to me. For one thing, Uncle Anthony was still at large, and it was evident that he thought the maid Nancy would sacrifice much by appearing in a public way.

"And what desires would she frustrate?" I asked with a laugh.

"Maybe you know, may be you do not. I will assume that you do not," was his answer.

I laughed again, for I saw what his answer might mean. Upon this he looked glum for some seconds, and seemed to hesitate as to what steps he should take.

"Look here," he cried presently. "I will admit you are a clever fellow, Trevanion. It is a compliment you paid me, and I will return it. I will not pretend that I came here out of pure desire to set you free. I did not. But I can set you free!"

"Undoubtedly."

"And I will—if you, that is, if you make it worth while."

"You wish to bargain with me, I know," was my answer; "why did you not say so at first? But a bargain assumes *quid pro quo*."

"Well, I'll give you as much as you give me."

"What will you give?"

"Your liberty."

"And what do you require?"

He hesitated a second, and then he spoke in his old measured way. "First, I require to know where Mistress Nancy Molesworth is now. Second, I wish you to tell me your reasons for taking her away from Endellion. Third, I desire to be informed of all you know concerning that lady."

It was in the last question that my interest particularly lay. For, as the readers of this history know, I myself was in almost total ignorance of the things he desired to know. It is true, if I told him of my conversation with Peter Trevisa and his son, he would form his own surmises concerning Peter's plans, but even then I doubted if I should impart the information he wanted.

"You must surely know more about Mistress Nancy than I," I replied evasively. "Did your father not take her at the death of her father? Did he not send her to France? Did you not receive her at Endellion a few months ago? What, then, should there be for me to impart?"

"You know," he answered; "be frank with me. You were with her alone for many hours, and she told you many things."

"True, she told me many things," I replied; "but concerning what do you wish me to speak?"

Again he hesitated. I saw that he was afraid lest he might betray himself, and this was what I desired him to do.

"What do you know of her parentage, her father and mother's marriage? What of her father's will?"

"Was there a will?" I said at a venture, because I saw that it was by an effort that he mentioned it.

His face turned pale. Evidently I had touched a sore spot. My heart gave a bound, for I connected his question with the remark the priest had let fall at Padstow and Peter Trevisa's desire to get the maid at Treviscoe.

"Come, Trevanion," he said again, "let us be frank."

"Yes," I replied; "let us be frank. At present it is you who ask all the questions, while you give no information yourself."

"I have offered to pay you for your information," he said. "I have offered you your liberty."

"True," I answered, "you have offered it; but what assurance have I that you would fulfil your promise? I would not trust you as far as I could throw a bull by the horns. You have asked me many questions. By answering them I should place a great deal of power in your hands. Directly I told you all that you desire to know, you would leave Launceston and act on the informa-

tion I have given; then when I am tried, what proof have I that you will tell the truth?"

"On my word of sacred honour, I will set you free."

"A snap of my finger for your sacred honour, Otho Killigrew," I cried, suiting the action to the word. "Indeed, I very much doubt if you dare to give such evidence as might set me free. Your family is too deeply implicated."

"Trust Otho Killigrew for that," he replied scornfully; "I always play to win."

"Look you," I said at length, "assuming that the charges you have brought against me are not shown to be worthless before the assizes, and reckoning that an order does not come from Hugh Boscawen to set me at liberty, I might on certain conditions be inclined to make a promise."

"What?" he cried eagerly.

"I expect that in the ordinary course of things my trial will come off in about a month," I said. "Well, if I am brought to trial, and you give such evidence as will set me free, then when I am out of all danger I might tell you what I know."

"You do not trust me?"

"Not a whit."

"Yet you expect me to trust you."

"A Trevanion never yet broke his word, while the promises of the Endellion Killigrews are as brittle as pie-crust."

I thought I was fairly safe in making this promise. I should in this case insure my liberty; at any rate, I should give Otho a great incentive to do his best to prove my innocence. Moreover,

I had but little to tell, even if I related all the suspicions to which I have referred, and which shall be set down in due order. And even if my information should be the means of placing the maid Nancy in Otho's power, I should be at liberty to act on her behalf.

"A month, a month," he said at length, as if musing.

"During which time I shall be within the boundary walls of Launceston Castle," I replied.

"But if I go to Hugh Boscawen, and prevail upon him to give an order for your release before the trial?"

"Of course the promise holds good," and I laughed inwardly as I thought how little I could tell him.

"You will tell me where Mistress Nancy Molesworth is?" he cried.

"I will tell you where I took her," I replied.

"And why you took her away from Endellion?"

"Yes."

For a few seconds he hesitated as if in doubt. "In three days I will return with an order for your release," he cried.

After he had gone, I almost repented for what I had done, for I felt afraid of Otho Killigrew. He played his cards in such a manner that I did not know what he held in his hand. I realized that by telling him who it was that employed me, I might give him an advantage, the full meaning of which I could not understand. True, I should be at liberty before telling him, and thus I had

fancied I should be free to take action in the maid's defence. But on consideration I could not but remember that his fertile brain might conceive a dozen things whereby, although I might be free from the charge of treason, I could still be made powerless to render service.

However, nothing could be accomplished without risk, and possibly the risk that I had taken was the least possible under the circumstances. I therefore tried to make plans of action which I might carry into effect the hour I regained my liberty. Presently the old thought of seeking to escape grew upon me. Supposing I could get away from the castle, I should at the end of the three days be free from pursuit, for once Hugh Boscawen's warrant were in Pyper's hands he could no longer be justified in searching for me. The difficulty was in getting away and then eluding my pursuers until such time as the governor should receive Falmouth's communication. I had many times considered the position of the Witch's Tower, which was not far from the boundary walls of the castle grounds. I saw that, in order to escape, I must first of all be able to either break down the door or squeeze my body through one of the slits in the walls of the tower. To do either of these things was not easy. The door was heavy and iron-studded, besides being carefully locked; the slits in the wall, which were really intended as windows, were very narrow, certainly not wide enough for a man of my build to squeeze himself through. But supposing this could be done, there were still the boundary walls of the castle grounds

which stood in the way of my escape. During the hours of daylight, when I had been allowed to walk around the prison grounds, I had carefully examined these, and I fancied I could manage to scale them in one or two places. But they were closely watched through the day, and at night I with the other prisoners was safely under lock and bolt.

Jenkins, the turnkey, was a man of average build and strength, and should a favourable opportunity occur I could doubtless easily gag him and take away his keys; but such an experiment was fraught with much danger. Throughout the whole of the night following Otho Killigrew's visit, during which time he was riding southward, I worked out my plans, and when morning came prepared to carry them into effect. Although I watched carefully through the whole of the morning no opportunity came, and when the afternoon drew to a close and I had not even begun to act, I felt exceedingly despondent.

Two days after Otho Killigrew's visit, about an hour before sunset, I saw Jenkins trying, as I thought, to catch my attention. He winked at me several times, and placed his forefinger on his lip as though he meditated on some secret thing. Lethbridge, however, was with him, and so there was no opportunity for me to ask him what he meant. After a while, however, seeing that Lethbridge had turned his back on us, he put a letter in my hand.

As may be imagined, as soon as I was able I broke the seal and read the contents. It was

written boldly in a man's hand. This was how it ran:

"At ten o'clock to-night the warder will visit you. He will be alone. You must bind and gag him. Means to do this will be found in his pockets. You must then leave the tower and make your way to the angle in the boundary wall nearest your prison. You will there find a rope hanging. On the other side of the wall you will find friends."

I had never hoped for such a message as this. I had expected to be shortly visited by Lawyer Hendy, but the thought that any one had been planning for my escape had never occurred to me. Who my friends might be I knew not, but they had evidently bribed Jenkins, at least such was my thought.

For an hour I was jubilant, but at the end of the time doubts began to cross my mind. Was this some ruse of the Killigrews? Should I escape only to tell Otho what I had promised him and then be captured by the prison authorities? Again and again I looked at the handwriting. It was altogether strange to me; but it was evidently the work of a man. Who then but Otho would take such a step?

And yet on reconsideration I thought he would know me better than to believe I should answer his questions under such circumstances. He had promised to prove my innocence to Lord Falmouth, and to obtain from him a written warrant for my liberty. No, no; it must be some one other than Otho. But who?

Uncle Anthony!

No sooner had the thought of him occurred to me than all my doubts departed. The mysterious old hermit and storyteller had heard of my condition, he had come to Launceston, and by methods peculiar to himself had obtained an influence over Jenkins. Again I read the letter, and I felt sure I saw his hand and mind in every word.

Doubtless, too, he would be able to tell me much about the maid Nancy which I desired to know, and perchance give me power over the Killigrews. He had doubtless formed a plan of action and provided means to carry it out. I could have laughed aloud, and even then I thought I could see the grim smile upon the old man's face and the curious twinkle of his deep-set eyes.

Eagerly I waited for ten o'clock to come. Never did minutes seem to drag along so wearily, never had the silence of my prison seemed so oppressive.

After much weary waiting, a clock began to strike. I counted the strokes eagerly. It had struck ten. It was the church clock which struck, and I knew that the jail was ordered by the time thereby indicated. For as all who have been to Launceston know, the parish church is situated near the castle, and is of rare beauty, while the sound of the bells seems to come from the very heart of the ancient fortress.

Knowing that the hour mentioned in the letter had arrived, therefore, I was, if possible, more eagerly expectant than ever. My heart thumped loudly at every sound, and in my heart I cursed

the wailing of the wind among the trees, because I thought it kept me from hearing the first approach of my jailer.

For a long weary time I waited, but no footsteps greeted my ears. I felt my nerves tingling even to the bottom of my feet, and a thousand times I imagined whisperings and altercations which had no actual existence.

Presently the church clock struck again, and its deep tones echoed across the valley towards St. Thomas' Church, and also towards St. Stephen's, both of which lay in the near distance. Doubtless the rest of the prisoners were asleep, and the sonorous sounds sweeping across hill and dale was nothing to them. But to me it came like a death-knell to my hopes. An hour had passed since the time mentioned in the letter I had received had come, and still I had heard no one approach.

I placed my body against the door and pressed hardly. It yielded not one whit. I climbed to one of the windows in the wall and looked out. The night was drear, the clouds hung heavily in the sky, neither moon nor stars appeared. No sound reached me save the sighing of the wind among the branches of the trees.

Still I waited, still I listened—all in vain.

The clock struck twelve.

As the sound of the last stroke of the bell died away, I heard something outside like the croaking of a raven; a few seconds later I heard whispering voices.

Again I climbed to the window in the wall and

looked out. Beneath me, perhaps ten feet down, I saw two human figures. One I thought I recognized as Jenkins, the other was strange to me. The man whom I concluded to be Jenkins carried a lantern in his hand, but it was but dimly lighted. When lifted, however, it revealed to me a form wrapped in a long cloak. No face was visible; it was hidden by a hood attached to the cloak.

"Open the door of the tower, I tell you."

"I dare not." It was Jenkins who spoke, and his voice was full of fear.

"But you promised."

"I know I did; but I be feared, I tell 'ee. I shud be axed questshuns, and I be es fullish as a cheeld."

"I gave you money."

"I know you ded; but there, I tell 'ee I caan't. Go 'way, do'ee now, or we sh'll be vound out, an' it'll go 'ard wi oal ov us."

"But I promised that all should be well with you, and that you should have a big reward."

"I knaw, I knaw. That maid you 'ad maade me veel silly, and she cud make me promise anything, but that was in the daytime, when I wos as bould as a lion. But tes night now, and I be feared, I tell 'ee. Besides, how could you make et right fur me; ya be'ant nothin' but a youngish chap. Who be 'ee? What be 'ee called?"

"Who am I?" and as if by magic the voice which had reached me in a hoarse whisper now became like that of an old woman. It was pitched in a high key and it quavered much, save

when it took a lower tone, and then it became like the croaking of a raven.

"Open the door of my tower," said the voice.

I could scarce help trembling myself as I heard the tones, but the effect on Jenkins was more marked.

"*Your* tower; oa my Gor!" he moaned.

"Yes, my tower," said the voice, still alternating between the tones of an old toothless woman and the hoarse croaking of a raven. "My tower; the place where I was imprisoned, the place where I saw dark spirits of the dead, and heard the secrets of those who cannot be seen by human eyes. Here I lay, unloved, uncared for; here my bones were burnt and my flesh was consumed; here my guilty soul took its flight, only to come back and haunt my grim prison—sometimes in visible shape, sometimes unseen save by the eyes of the departed. Open the door of *my* tower, I say, or you shall suffer the tortures I suffered!"

"Oa, my Gor, my Gor!" moaned the trembling voice of Jenkins, "tes Jezebel Grigg, the witch."

"Will you open the door?" continued the voice.

"Oa I caan't!" whined Jenkins like one demented; "when you slocked me out in the mornin', you wos a spruce chap, and 'ad a purty maid weth 'ee. Oa 'ave marcy 'pon me, mawther Grigg; have marcy 'pon me!"

"Mercy," was the reply, "mercy! You have broken your word—disobeyed me. What shall keep me from causing your flesh to drop from your bones, your fingers to wither amidst agonies of pain, your every limb to burn even as mine

burned when the fires were lit around me? Do you want to keep company with me, John Jenkins? Open the door, or prepare to go with me to-night!"

"Oa, I will, I will," moaned Jenkins; "I will; but how did 'ee git in 'ere? The doors and gaates be all locked."

"What are doors and gates to Jezebel Grigg's spirit?" and the hooded form laughed; and the laugh to my excited ears was like the croaking of a raven into which the spirit of evil had entered.

I heard the clanking of keys at the door, and a second later Jenkins entered, the lantern shaking in his hand, his face pale as death.

"I say, Maaster," he said, his teeth chattering, his voice quavering.

"Yes," was my reply, and if the truth must be told my heart quaked somewhat, for by his side was the strange hooded form.

"Follow me, Roger Trevanion," said the voice.

"Where?" I asked.

"To freedom."

"Freedom from what?" for I liked not the dark shapeless thing greatly, although I seemed to be upheld in a way I knew not.

"From the law, from the Killigrews," was the reply in a hoarse whisper.

"Very well," was my reply. "I am ready to follow you."

"John Jenkins, you will take Roger Trevanion's place this night," said my deliverer.

"No, no," cried John, "I darn't stay 'ere oal by myself in your tower."

"Speak as loud as that again, and you will follow me whither you would not go. Listen, John Jenkins. You must stay here. I promise you this: no harm shall come to you. I will not haunt the tower this night. There, lie on the straw. If you make a sound before the church clock strikes seven to-morrow morning you shall feel the power of Jezebel Grigg, the witch who was burnt here. When you are asked questions in the morning, tell the governor that you were seeing that all was safe for the night when I came and put you here. Give me your keys."

Like a thing half dead he obeyed, and though I was not altogether free from superstitious fear I could not help laughing at the fellow's agony.

"Now follow me, Roger Trevanion," said the hooded form, turning to me, still in the voice of a toothless old woman.

I followed without a word, but not without many misgivings, for although I had professed to scorn the power of witches, I was at that time sore distraught. Still she promised me liberty, and in my inmost heart I believed that the creature was a friend.

When we were outside the tower she locked the door carefully and placed the key close by. After this she led the way to the angle in the wall spoken of in the letter, where I saw the end of a rope ladder.

"Climb, Roger Trevanion," she whispered.

"You are a woman; go first," I said.

"Climb, Roger Trevanion," she repeated imperiously; "your danger is greater than mine."

Much as I disliked doing this I obeyed. A few seconds later I stood on the top of the wall, and turning round I saw the dim outline of the castle looming up into the dark sky, while lying beneath it was the unwholesome den where the prisoners lay. Looking beneath me, I could see the hooded form of my deliverer, standing as still as a statue. On the other side I saw three horses saddled.

"Hold the rope while I climb."

I held the rope as commanded, and a minute later the woman stood by my side.

"Could you leap to that branch of the tree, and descend to the path that way?" she said, pointing to the spreading branches of an elm-tree which grew close by.

"Easily," I replied.

"Then hold the ladder while I descend."

Like one in a dream I obeyed, and then watched while with great agility she descended from fifteen to twenty feet below.

"Now be quick," she said, "all is ready."

At that moment my heart gave a great leap, for I heard a cry come from the Witch's Tower. A wild, despairing cry, more like the yell of a wild beast than that of a human being.

I took my hands from the rope, and immediately it was pulled away. I was on the top of the castle wall alone.

"Be quick, quick, or all is lost," cried a voice peremptorily from beneath.

I did not hesitate, dangerous as my feat was. In the gloom of the night I saw the dark branch of the tree; I gave a leap towards it and caught it.

The branch yielded with my weight so much that my feet were only a few feet from the ground.

"Let go, let go!"

I obeyed the command and dropped harmlessly to the ground.

"Now be quick and mount!"

A horse stood by my side, saddled and bridled. In an instant I leapt on its back, noticing as I did so that I had now two companions instead of one, and that they also mounted the horses that stood waiting.

"Ride hard!" said my deliverer, turning her horse's face southward.

I gladly obeyed, for I breathed the air of freedom. I was now outside the great high walls within which I had been confined. The spring air seemed sweeter there, while my heart grew warm again and all feelings of fear departed. Midnight as it was, and dark as was the gloomy prison from which I had escaped I seemed in a land of enchantment.

Again a cry, a fearful agonizing cry came from the Witch's Tower, which made me laugh aloud, for Jenkins' fears seemed foolish as I struck my heels into my horse's sides.

Neither of my companions spoke; they seemed as eager to get away as I. We made no noise, for we rode through a meadow. Presently, however, we jumped a low hedge, and then the iron hoofs of our steeds rang out on the hard highway, but even as they did so we could hear the fearful cry of John Jenkins, who lay imprisoned within the dark walls of the Witch's Tower.

CHAPTER XXI.

DESCRIBES MY JOURNEY FROM LAUNCESTON CASTLE TO A LONELY MANSION ACCOMPANIED BY TWO WOMEN.

THE events I have just described happened so suddenly that I was too excited to think seriously who my deliverer could be. I knew that Jenkins would arouse the other jailers, and that in a few minutes the governor of the prison would be acquainted with the fact of my escape. I was sure, moreover, that much as I believed he sympathized with me, he would seek to do his duty as the constable of the castle and bring me back to the prison again. It is true Otho Killigrew had promised to arrive the next morning with a warrant from Hugh Boscawen to set me at liberty, but upon this I could not depend. I knew, moreover, that should I be brought to trial the fact of my attempted escape would go against me. We had several things in our favour. I imagined that we were mounted moderately well. My horse carried me with seeming ease, although it was too small of bone to keep up speed through a long journey. The steeds of my companions kept breast to breast with mine. In any case, it must take Hugh Pyper some considerable time to get horses in order to follow us. Then the wind blew from the northeast, and thus the sound of our horses' hoofs would be wafted away from my

late prison. It would be, therefore, difficult for him to determine which way we had gone, especially as about a mile out of the town there were several branch roads. The night was dark, too, and thus to track us would be impossible, at any rate, until morning came.

On the other hand, however, I was unarmed and practically alone. As far as I knew my companions were two women, and although one of them had effected my escape in a marvelous way, I suspected that if fighting became necessary they would be a hindrance rather than a help.

This led me to think who they might be, and to wonder who it was that had impersonated the witch Jezebel Grigg who had been buried in the tower where I had been confined. For, once out in the free open air, all superstitious dread had departed. That it was Uncle Anthony I could no longer believe. True, the veiled figure was quite as tall as Jenkins, my jailer; perhaps taller, but in no way did it remind me of the lonely hermit with whom I had talked so long on the top of Roche Rock, and whom I had left sick and wounded in the ruined chapel in the parish of St. Mawgan.

Presently every fibre of my body quivered with a great joy, my blood fairly leaped in my veins, and I could have shouted aloud for joy. My deliverer was the maid Nancy! She had heard of my arrest, had traced me to my prison, and had provided means for my escape. Hitherto I had been the deliverer, I had schemed and fought for her escape from Endellion; now all had changed.

She had entered my prison walls and set me at liberty, not for any selfish purposes of her own, but because of the kindness of her heart.

The thought was joy unspeakable; at the same time it filled me with shame. She whom I had been willing to betray into the house of Peter Trevisa for a bribe, had dared a thousand things to save me from danger and possible death.

A thousand questions flashed into my mind to ask her, but a weight was upon my lips. She rode by my side, still covered with the dark mantle, and still hooded. The other was doubtless her faithful serving-maid, Amelia Lanteglos. True, her face was hidden and she spoke not, but even in the darkness I thought I recognized her strong figure, recognized the easy way she rode, even as hundreds of girls of her class rode in my native county.

Meanwhile the horses dashed along freely, the road was good, and nothing impeded our progress. When we came to the junction of roads close by Lewannick, she did not ride straight forward towards Altarnun, but turned to the left through Lewannick village, until we came to four crossways, called Trevadlock Cross. Soon afterwards we reached another church town, North Hill by name, close by which a friend of my father lived, at a house named Trebartha Hall. But we did not stay here, much as I should have liked under ordinary circumstances to have spoken to my father's friend. We crossed the River Lynher, a clear flowing stream which rushes between some fine rugged hills, and then continued on our

journey until we reached the parish of Linkenhorne.

"If we keep on at this speed, we shall be in the town of Liskeard in a little more than an hour," I said presently, feeling that I could keep silence no longer. Indeed I wondered much afterwards how I could have been speechless so long, feeling sure as I did that the woman I loved was by my side.

No reply, however, was made to me; and my companions never so much as moved their hoods from their faces.

By this time our horses showed signs of fatigue; especially was mine becoming spent, for I was no light weight to carry.

"It will be well to rest at Liskeard," I said, "if only for the sake of the horses."

"No, we must not stay there."

She tried to speak in the same tone as when she had commanded John Jenkins to open the door of the Witch's Tower, but I thought I detected the voice I had learned to love in spite of the hoarse whisper.

"I have not spoken to you, Mistress Nancy Molesworth," I replied quietly, "for I thought you desired not speech, and I would not have said aught to you now; only in an hour it will be daylight, and my horse cannot carry me many miles farther."

I thought I saw her start as I mentioned her name, while her companion made a quick movement. But neither gave answer to my words. Silently we sped along, my steed panting much but still holding out bravely.

Presently we came to a steep hill, and in mercy to the poor animals we had to allow them to slacken speed; indeed I sprung from my saddle and walked by my horse's head.

"We have ridden so hard that I have not had a chance to thank you for this great service, Mistress Molesworth," I said; "indeed we had gone several miles before I divined who you were. Words are poor, and they cannot tell the gratitude I feel."

She made no answer to my words.

"At first I dared not believe it could be you; indeed I knew of no one who could bring me deliverance"; and still she kept her hood closely around her head, answering nothing.

"Your heart is kind," I went on, "and unlike women generally, you are not afraid of danger. Believe me, I am not ungrateful. I am your servant for life. I am afraid you are still in danger, and I rejoice that I am free to help you."

Daylight was now dawning, indeed I could see the colour of her gray cloak plainly.

"Will you not pull aside your hood?" I said, scarcely thinking of my words.

She did not obey me, but I noticed her gloved hand tremble. I saw, too, that she reeled in her saddle.

"You are ill!" I cried, and then I rushed to her side, for she was falling from her horse. During the hours of danger and hard riding she had shown no sign of weakness, but now the danger was far behind, her woman's weakness overcame her.

As I caught her, she fell in my arms like one in a dead faint; so I laid her carefully on the grassy bank beside the road. By this time the other woman had dismounted and had come to her side.

"Watch here, while I go and fetch some water," I cried, and then seeing a pool near by, I stooped and scooped some in the hollow of my hand. When I came back, however, she was sitting up, and both women had drawn their hoods more closely around their faces. If it were Mistress Nancy, she did not wish me to recognize her. But it must be she, for who else would have gone through so much to come to me? She must have travelled with her companion some sixty miles through a lonely part of the country in order to get to Launceston, and when there must have braved all sorts of dangers in order to effect my liberty. The thought made my heart swell with such pride and joy that my bosom seemed too small to contain it. In spite of my baseness in selling myself to Peter Trevisa, she could not altogether despise me. I knew now that I had never loved the maid to whom I thought I had given my heart as a boy. My feeling for her was only a passing passion, of no more importance than chaff, and as light as thistledown. But all was different now. I was thirty-two years of age, and I had given all the strength of my life to her. True, my tongue was tied. I could not tell her of the fire that burned in my heart—I was, I knew, unworthy. By that fatal confession, as we rode by Tregothnan Gates through Tresillian, I had forever made it impos-

sible that she could think of me as I thought of her. Besides, I was homeless and landless. Looking at her as she sat there on the dewy bank that early spring morning, I would rather have lost my right arm than take the wages of my service to Peter Trevisa. The purity and truth of her life roused within me the nobility of my race. Better be a beggar from door to door than accept the prize of base service. I who had ceased to believe in the goodness of women, now realized that this maid made me ashamed of all the past and caused to arise in me a longing for the pure and the true. But my love for her was none the less hopeless. How could it be, when I was minute by minute dogged by the memory of the hour when I promised to be a Judas?

"Are you better?" I asked as gently as I could, for I knew how boorish I had become through the years.

"Yes, yes; we must hasten on. We may be followed." This she said like one afraid.

"But whither?" I asked. "If you would tell me your plans, your wishes, I could perchance carry them out. But you are overwrought—you need rest."

"No, no, I am quite strong. I can easily ride another thirty miles," and her voice was hoarse and unnatural.

"Even if you could, my horse is not fit to carry me so far," was my reply.

"But you are not out of danger."

"We must be thirty miles from Launceston Town," I said, "and no one could find me with

ease even here. But to what spot did you intend that I should go?"

It seemed strange even then that I should be following the plans of a woman; strange that a simple maid, as I believed her to be, should provide for me a safe hiding-place.

"I would rather not tell you," she replied; "that is, I think I had better not. You can trust me?" This she said wistfully, I thought.

"In everything," I answered eagerly, "but will you trust me, too? You are not fit to travel further, and after a few hours' rest we shall all be better. Let us go to yonder farmhouse and ask for food and shelter."

"Such an act might be dangerous."

"No. All our Cornish folk are hospitable; besides, my money has not been taken from me. I can pay the good folk well."

She eagerly caught at my proposal, so eagerly that I wondered at her swift change of opinion. A few minutes later, therefore, I stood knocking at a farmhouse door, asking for food and shelter for man and beast.

At first both the farmer and his wife looked at us suspiciously, but when I told him of my deliverer's weariness, how that she had fainted and fallen from her saddle, they gave us a warm welcome. Half an hour later, I sat with these farmer folk at breakfast, but my companions, still keeping their hoods tightly drawn around their faces, had followed the woman of the house into another apartment.

After breakfast the farmer's wife provided me

with a couch, in what she called "the pallor," where I gladly stretched my weary body and immediately fell asleep. When I awoke the afternoon was well advanced. Food was again placed before me, and after I had partaken thereof I went out into the farmyard to look after the horses. I had scarcely reached the stables when a sound reached my ears that made my heart sink like lead. It was the noise of many voices, and was not more than a mile away.

Without waiting a second I threw the saddles on the horses, and then rushed into the house. The farmer's wife had left the kitchen, leaving my companions alone. They were still closely hooded.

"Come," I cried, "we must start at this moment!"

"Why?"

"The hue and cry!"

"I am ready," she said, quietly but resolutely.

"Are the horses ready?"

"They are saddled and standing in the yard."

"Come then," and both left the room without another word.

At that moment the farmer's wife came into the kitchen again. Thinking it would be unwise to tell her our reason for leaving suddenly, I threw two guineas on the table, and then with a hurried good-bye left.

By this time the sound had become nearer, and my conjecture became confirmed.

"It may not be you they are after," she said; "they would hardly come so far."

Perhaps she was right. I remembered that hours ere this papers might have been placed in Hugh Pyper's hands commanding him to set me at liberty.

"Still it will be safer farther south," I said.

By this time we had mounted our horses and were galloping along the farm lane which led to the high road. She whom in my heart I called my love was still clothed in her long gray cloak, her face still hidden from my sight. All weakness seemed to have left her now; she was the embodiment of resolution, and courage, and strength.

The sounds of pursuers became fainter and more distant.

"If we go through Liskeard at this speed we shall attract attention, and if the people be following us, they will be informed of the direction we have taken."

"But we will not touch Liskeard," I said. "I know the country well now. If you will tell me where you wish to go I will guide you by the least traversed roads."

"Go to Lostwithiel then," she said; "after that I will act as guide."

"Wondering at her words, I led the way through the village of St. Cleer, leaving Liskeard on our left, until after more than two hours' hard riding we came to the village of Boconnoc.

Arrived here, I stopped suddenly, for a suspicion entered my mind as to the place she intended to go.

"Look you, my lady," I said, "we are at Bo-

connoc, five miles only from Lostwithiel; will you tell me of your intended destination?"

"You said you would trust me," was her reply.

"I remember," I cried, harshly I am afraid, because for the first time since boyhood the feeling of jealousy made me almost beside myself. "But let me ask you one question. Is it your intention to go to Polperro?"

"And if I do not desire to go there?" she said, after hesitating a few seconds, "what then?"

"I will go with you whither you will, asking no questions."

"But you do not desire to go to Polperro?"

I was silent, but I hoped that she understood my feelings.

"In three hours, four at the most, we ought to be at our journey's end if we ride hard," she said, "until then I ask you to trust me."

With this I was fain to be content, and almost ashamed of myself, we continued to ride southward. An hour later I saw that my suspicions were groundless. We were going away from Polperro. After we had passed Lostwithiel I asked her to be the guide, but she told me to lead on to St. Austell, after which she would choose the road.

About two hours after dark we entered a part of the country that was strange to me, but my guide evidently knew the road well, for in spite of the darkness she never hesitated as to the way we should take. Presently we came to a lane, down which we rode for some distance, and then stopped at a small house, which in the darkness

looked to me like a lodge. No sooner did we stop than a light shone, and a minute later I heard a gate swing on rusty hinges.

"All well?"

"All well," was the reply, which I judged was spoken by an old man.

We passed through the open way, after which I heard some one lock the gates.

By this time the sky, which had been cloudy all day, cleared. There was no moon, but the stars shone clearly overhead. As well as I could I looked around me, and saw that we were riding along what seemed to me a disused carriage drive. Huge trees bordered the way, the branches of which nearly met overhead. The leaves were far from fully grown, however; and thus looking upward I could see the stars twinkling.

The memory of that night will never leave me. Even now the feelings which possessed me then come back. Everything seemed unreal. The dark trees on either side of the way looked like tall spectres, the women who had been with me since the previous night seemed mere phantoms of the mind. The clank of the horses' hoofs grated on my excited nerves until I felt like crying out.

Neither of us spoke. I was too much wrought upon. Perhaps they were. What had seemed reasonable enough in the day appeared like madness now. In spite of what I had seen and heard I could not believe that the maid Nancy would expose herself to so much danger in order to rescue me.

Darker and darker became the road, for huge evergreens, laurels, and rhododendrons grew between the oaks. Moreover, I saw that we were descending into a valley. The night winds swept among the trees, making sweet music, but to me it was like the dirge of death. A bat darting to and fro struck my face with its wing, and an owl hooted dismally.

"How much further?" I asked, more because I wanted to hear the sound of human voices than from desire to ask questions.

But no reply was given, and but for the love in my heart, I felt, strong man as I was, like giving way to fear.

Presently I saw a faint twinkling light, and afterwards the dark outline of a huge building appeared. A few minutes later we had come up close to an ivy-covered house.

My companions dismounted and motioned me to do the same. Then out of the shadows came a man and took the horses. I heard a bell clang through a seemingly empty building, and then the door by which we stood opened.

"Come in."

I obeyed, feeling more than ever that my experiences could not be real.

"This way, please."

I followed my companion without a word along a wide corridor, after which I descended some steps, until I imagined I must be below the level of the earth. Then she opened the door of a compartment, and we entered together.

It was a low-ceiled room, but looked comfort-

able and well-appointed. A lamp burned brightly on the table, and a cheerful wood fire burned in the chimney place. Before the fire a huge arm-chair was placed.

"Will you sit here and rest? I will return presently."

Mechanically I obeyed, and a moment later I was left alone. The room, the house—everything was as silent as death. I walked around the apartment, and stamped my feet to assure myself that I was not dreaming. I held my hands before the wood fire, and lifted the logs from place to place so that I might convince myself that I had not entered an enchanted region, such as I had read about in my boyhood. Then I examined the room more closely. I could nowhere discover a window. What did it mean? Had I been removed from one prison to another. Had I been mistaken as to the identity of my deliverer? Why had she kept her face hidden? It must have been her. Who else would have undergone so much?

I sat down in the chair, and stretched my legs wearily. Twenty-four hours before I had sat straining my ears in the Witch's Tower of Launceston Castle, and now I was immured in a far more lonely spot. I had asked no questions because I believed that the woman I loved rode by my side. Had I done right?

A distant rumbling noise reached me. Where was I? To whom did this house belong? By what right had I been brought here?

I heard a knock at the door, and a second later an old man entered.

"If you will follow me, sir, you shall have change of raiment, and water to wash with."

Like one in a dream I followed him, and to my astonishment I found in an adjoining compartment not only clothes but arms. A sword hung by the wall, a pair of pistols lay on a table. The clothes were well made and of good quality as befitted a gentleman.

"Here is all you will want, I think, sir. When you have washed and dressed will you be pleased to go back to the other room?"

A few minutes later I had removed the muddy-stained garments which I had worn in Launceston Castle, and had clothed myself in those which lay in the room. They looked quite new, as though they had just come from the hands of a tailor. They fitted me well, too; and I must confess to a feeling of pleasure as I beheld myself.

When I returned to the room into which I had at first entered, I found that the table had been spread for food, but no one was in it. Again I sat down and tried to think, but my mind seemed a blank—I was dazed with the experiences of the last twenty-four hours.

Presently my heart beat fast, for I heard light tripping footsteps outside the room door. This was followed by gentle knocking.

"Come in."

The door opened, and to my joy Mistress Nancy Molesworth entered. She met me with a smile, but there was, I thought, something distant and repellant about it.

"Food will be immediately brought, Master Trevanion," she said. "I am sure you must need it."

"I need something more," I replied.

"And that?" was the response. "Anything in my power to give, you shall have."

"The removal of mystery," I replied. "I have spent the whole of this day like one in a dream. I seem to be enveloped in shadows."

"I have much to tell you by and by," she answered.

"And much to ask, too, I trust," I cried. "You have saved me from I know not what; for I know it is you to whom I owe everything. You will let me serve you, for verily you need service."

"We will talk of many things at the proper time," she replied, "but food is being brought."

Both of us stood silent while the old serving-man brought food; then when he had gone she turned to leave me.

"Mistress Molesworth," I said, "you will not condemn me to eat my food alone. May I be honoured with your company at supper?"

She hesitated a second. "Thank you," she said, "you will desire quiet after so much excitement. I will return to you to-morrow."

I sat down with a sad heart, and ate the food with but a poor appetite. During my meal I heard only one sound. It was that of a clock striking the hour of midnight.

After supper I went into the bedroom I have mentioned, and fell into a deep sleep, from which

I did not wake till late next day. When I got up I hoped to see Mistress Nancy at once, and so was mightily disappointed when the old serving-man brought me a message from her telling me that she would not be able to visit me till night.

CHAPTER XXII.

MISTRESS NANCY TELLS ME MANY THINGS.

"I CAN think of nothing to say to you till I have thanked you again and again for a service which I thought no woman could render."

"It is of that which I do not wish to speak."

"But I must. I did not believe a woman could possess such rare courage and foresight. I did not believe a woman could plan so well, execute so bravely. Especially do I wonder when I realize my own unworthiness. I thank you from the depths of my soul."

Mistress Nancy had visited my compartment as she had promised, and at my request she sat on a low seat by the fire, while I stood leaning on the back of the huge chair which I have mentioned. She wore the same garments as when we had travelled together for the first time. Her face was pale, but very beautiful; her dark eyes shone with a look of resolution; her dark curling locks glistened in the lamp-light.

"I did not mean you to know who your deliverer was. But it does not matter." She spoke indifferently, I thought.

"It does matter!" I cried vehemently. "I should be base indeed if I do not remember such service with gratitude until my dying day."

"I did what no woman could help doing." This she said slowly.

"I do not understand."

"Yet there should be no difficulty in doing so. You rescued me, you thought of me, acted for me."

"Mention not that again," I replied bitterly, "I am sorely ashamed."

"I do not mean the—the first part of the journey, but afterwards. I have heard of your trial before Lord Falmouth, heard of what Otho Killigrew said. You refused to tell all the truth because you feared to hurt me. You did not wish that man to know anything concerning me."

I wondered who her informant might be, but I did not speak.

"When I knew you were taken to Launceston, and feeling sure that Otho would show no mercy if you were brought to trial, I did my best. I could do no other—I—I—would have done the same for any one."

She spoke coldly; her tones were hard and unfeeling. My heart grew chill; the hope that arose in me, in spite of myself, was dispelled.

"Thank you," I said, as steadily as I could. "But why—why did you wish me to remain in ignorance—as to who you were?"

"Because I thought it was better so. No one who saw me in Launceston would recognize me now."

"What disguise did you wear? What means did you use to—to effect my escape; that is, beyond those I know of?"

"I would rather not tell you."

I was silent again, for her manner made me feel that she still scorned me. I looked towards her; she was gazing steadily into the fire.

"Where am I now?" I asked, after a painful silence.

"At Restormel."

"Ah!"

"Does the fact surprise you?"

"Everything surprises me. Nothing surprises me. I am somewhat dazed. Restormel, that is your father's house, your own home?"

"My father's house—yes. My own home—I know not."

"What do you mean?" and at that moment I remembered the suspicions which were aroused in my mind by Otho Killigrew's questions.

Again she refrained from replying, her eyes still fixed on the glowing embers.

"Let me tell you something," I cried. "My thoughts may be groundless, but it may be well for you to know them."

Then I related to her the conversation I had had with the Catholic priest at Padstow. At that time I had not regarded it of importance, as it simply referred to a complaint about the unfairness of the marriage laws, where Catholics were concerned. After this I told her of Otho Killigrew's visit, of what he had said, and of the bargain we had made.

"On consideration I thought it best to promise him this," I concluded. "He aroused certain suspicions in my mind, and I thought I could still serve you if I were free. It may be I acted wrongly, but I thought it was worth the risk."

During the recital she uttered no sound. She seemed to be much changed since that night when we had parted at Treviscoe.

"And I—I have relieved you of the necessity of telling him anything, I suppose?" she said icily.

"Yes," I replied, feeling that she mistrusted me again. I longed to ask her what had happened since the night I had left her with Peter Trevisa, but I dared not; her manner froze the words on my lips.

"You do not know why Trevisa asked you to take me to his house?" she said presently.

"I only know what he told me. I knew that was not all the truth. He thought he had some hold upon you."

"And you had no idea what it was?"

"Not then."

"And now?"

"Nothing but what was aroused in my mind by what I have just told you."

"Master Roger Trevanion," she said, rising from her seat and facing me, "you tried to persuade me not to go to that man's house."

"I did."

"And I persisted in going. I did so for two reasons."

"And they?"

"One was that you should be able to claim the price of your hire."

"Do not taunt me with that."

"The other was that I determined to find out the reason he had in wishing to get me there. I had not been able to understand all the Killigrews had hinted from time to time. I thought that Trevisa's motives might have a connection with what they had said."

"And you were not afraid?"

"Women are not all so cowardly as you think. I might have acted differently had his son been with him, but when I found him alone I determined to stay until I had discovered what was in his mind."

"And you discovered it?"

"Yes."

I could not help admiring her as she stood there before me so brave, so far-seeing, so resolute. She was barely twenty-one. She had revealed to me all the weaknesses, all the tenderness of a woman; yet now, after having accomplished what few men would think of attempting, she was calmer than I. As I have said, she was taller and more largely formed than most women, and the hand that rested on a table by her side was as firm as a man's. No one could in any way associate her with littleness or poverty of nature. Everything told of purity, of nobleness, of beauty of life. Remembering my bargain with Trevisa, I dared not look at her; but I was glad I had refused to take the price of my work.

I waited for her to continue, for I felt I had no right to ask her questions.

"You told me," she went on, "that Peter Trevisa was a cunning, evil-minded man. You were right. Like all such men, he judged the motives of others by his own. What he would do under certain circumstances, he would expect others to do."

"Yes, that is so."

"He thought, acting on this principle, that if he could get me into his house, I should be glad to fall in with his plans."

"He told me that his son Peter had seen you at Endellion," I said; "that he fell in love with you, that it was the intention of Colman Killigrew to marry you to his son whom you hated, that I should be rendering you a service by taking you to him."

"Do not speak of his son's love," she said; "the thought of it is not pleasant. It is true he told me the same story. I did not sleep in the house that night. Directly after your lawyer had gone I told him I desired to speak with him. He fawned and professed to be delighted. Presently his real reasons for trying to get me into the house came out. He tried to keep them back until his son came home, but in this he failed."

"And what were his reasons?" I asked eagerly in spite of myself.

"The first was this: He said he could prove that my father's marriage was illegal, and—and thus I had no true claim to the Restormel lands. You suspected this?"

I nodded.

"He told me, moreover, that he alone possessed the knowledge whereby it could be proved that I was not the rightful heir. If he did not disclose what he knew, no one would doubt my rights; or even if they doubted, they could have no case against me; if he told what he knew, I should be penniless."

"I see," I cried; "I see. Then he named the price of his silence."

"Yes."

"Of course that was that you should marry his son. I see. It was cunningly planned. He thinks his son Peter is a sort of Apollo, and he imagined that you would desire to effectually stop him from speaking by becoming his daughter. It would then be to his advantage to be silent."

"That was a part of his plan, but not all. He has found out that I possess knowledge of great importance."

"Knowledge of great importance?"

"Yes. It concerns the coming of Charles Stuart."

"You have seen the Pretender!" I cried.

"I have seen Charles Stuart. He visited the convent in which I was educated. He came once when Colman Killigrew was present. He sought to enlist my sympathies. I do not know why; but both he and Colman Killigrew discussed plans in my presence."

"And young Peter Trevisa found out this. How?"

"I do not know."

"Is your knowledge of such importance that it might be valuable to such as Hugh Boscawen?"

"Yes."

I longed to ask further questions, but refrained from doing so.

"Peter Trevisa believed that if I told him what I knew his son would be able to make use of it. The father is very ambitious for his son. He imagines that if he were to communicate important knowledge to the King it would mean preferment—perhaps knighthood."

"I see his plot."

"I refused to marry his son."

"Yes."

"I told him that even were his statements as to my father's marriage true, I would rather be penniless—than be bought."

I do not think she meant it, but her words hurt me like a knife-thrust.

"After that he changed his ground of attack," she went on quietly; "he said that if I would tell him what I knew of Charles Stuart's plans, his secret should die with him. He represented this as my duty. He said I might be saving the country, as well as giving his son Peter the greatest chance of his life. After this he went on to say that it was a shame for me to be robbed of my rightful heritage because of an unjust law."

"And after that?" I broke in eagerly.

"He said he would not have my answer that night; he would wait until young Peter came home."

"And you, of course, refrained from giving him an answer?"

"No. I told him that he could act as he pleased. Did I feel it a duty to inform the authorities concerning what I knew, I should do so without threat."

"And what did he say?"

"He denied all knowledge of threat. He called it an *arrangement*. He used honeyed terms; he was full of flattery. He professed to be delighted at my refusal to comply with his wishes, even while he used many means to lead me to alter my mind. He called himself all sorts of names for speaking to me in such a brutal way. He was only an old fool, he said, and had not stated the case properly; but when young Peter came back everything would assume a different aspect."

I could easily imagine the scheming old wretch while she told me of this interview. I could see his shifty, cunning eyes gleaming. I could hear him using all sorts of honeyed terms in order to gain his ends.

"And the conclusion of it all?" I asked at length.

"I left the house that night."

"How?"

"By means of Amelia. She found out the position of the stables. She saddled the horses, and we left Treviscoe without any one knowing about it."

"And you came here?"

"Yes."

"But you are in danger. Peter Trevisa is as

cunning as the devil. Both father and son are like ferrets; they can crawl into any hole. They see in the dark. In order to get here, you must have taken some one into your confidence. That some one may betray your trust."

She walked slowly across the room, and then came back to her former position.

"That night—when I left Endellion," she replied, "I took certain things away with me. Little relics left me by my father. I had heard that the house was left in charge of two old servants —one a kind of bailiff, who was commissioned by Colman Killigrew to act as steward until I should come of age."

"I see, yes."

"He has lived here all these years, with his wife. My guardian has visited Restormel only occasionally, but old Adam Coad has been a faithful old man. My father left a letter for me when he died, with orders that I should read it as soon as I was old enough. In it he mentioned this man as a faithful, loving servant. I wrote to Adam twice while I was in France; but I received no reply from him."

She ceased speaking, and I saw her lips tremble. Perhaps she remembered that she was a fatherless girl, and that her path was beset with snares.

"I accidentally heard while at Endellion that he was alive and that he managed the estate under my guardian's supervision."

"You brought your father's letter with you?" I suggested.

"Yes."

"But there is a lodge. We passed through the gates to-night."

"Fortune favoured me. That morning, after I had escaped from Treviscoe, just as I came up to the lodge gates, I saw two men talking to each other. I heard the one call the other Adam Coad."

"I see; and Adam received you?"

"After I had proved to him who I was—yes."

"And—and you trust him?"

"He is all my father said of him, and more. He has been kindness itself to me; through him I was able to bring you here. You are safe, too. Old Adam, his wife, and a serving-man who has lived with them all these years, are all, I verily believe, ready to die for me."

"Then you are staying here in secret?"

"Yes."

"And you have heard nothing of the Trevisas?"

"I know they have been searching for me."

"But they have disclosed nothing concerning your father's marriage?"

"No; I believe not."

"You found out that I had been taken prisoner through Adam, I suppose?"

"Yes. He looks a quiet, inoffensive old man; but he is very shrewd and not easily deceived. I told him that you had effected my escape from Endellion, and he knew enough of the Killigrews to be sure that they would have many schemes afoot."

"But if they suspect that you are here?"

"They would have a difficulty in finding me. This house has many rooms not easily discovered. This room is not known to the Killigrews. It is underground. The doorway cannot be seen from the outside, and can only be opened by touching a spring."

"I see; and you will stay here until you come of age?"

Again her lips trembled, and she moved nervously across the room.

"I wish I could be of further service to you," I said at length. "I am glad that you trust me enough to—to tell me what—what you have told me. Will you trust me further? Will you tell me all you can about your father's marriage? Believe me, I will rest neither night nor day until I have found out whether there is any truth in Peter Trevisa's statements."

"You will have to stay here—in privacy. You are not safe," was her reply. "That is, you must stay here until you can escape to France."

"You forget," I replied, "you forget Otho Killigrew's promise. If he hath laid such information before Hugh Boscawen as to lead him to give an order for my freedom, all danger is gone."

"You have still escaped from Launceston Castle."

"Yes, but if Hugh Pyper receives Viscount Falmouth's warrant for my freedom, he will say naught of my escape. Look, Mistress Nancy, let me serve you."

I spoke like a schoolboy. I thought nothing of

difficulties, I almost forgot the danger through which I had passed. Neither did I realize the importance of the news she had just imparted. The last ten years of my life seemed only a dream; I was a boy of twenty-two instead of a man of thirty-two. The maid had made me long to do impossible things, to undertake impossible missions. It has been said by some great writer that a convent school destroys all foresight, all calculation in a young girl's life. That continuous solitude, save for the companionship of her fellow-scholars, and seclusion from the life of the world, lead her to conjure up in her imagination all the romantic scenes which young girls love, even although she has never heard of such things. That on leaving the convent she is a prey to first impressions, and longings for love and romance; thus she never troubles about results, never comprehends difficulties and dangers.

Mistress Nancy proved this man to be wrong. Of the depths of her nature I knew but little, of her heart's longing I was ignorant; but she was constantly revealing to me a rare power of penetration; she was cool, courageous, and full of forethought. On the other hand, she seemed to know but little of the world's wisdom. The thought of losing her wealth caused her no apparent distress; the supposition that her father's marriage was not legal seemed to bring no painful thoughts to her mind. The bare thought of illegitimacy would bring anguish unspeakable to some; Mistress Nancy seemed to reck nothing of it. In this sense she was a child, ignorant of

the ways and thoughts of the world; in others she was capable of independent and daring action.

"Believe me," I continued presently, "to serve you is the dearest thought of my life. I owe it to you," I added as if in explanation.

"It would be wrong for you to rush into danger," she replied calmly. "If you are freed from danger, then I will claim your help again. But I have friends, and I am not afraid."

I looked into her eyes as she spoke, and I saw that no fear was expressed there. She did not seem to realize her position, and yet her words belied her apparent ignorance of the danger by which she was surrounded.

"You say that your knowlege concerning the Pretender is of importance," I said, after a pause.

"Yes."

"Is it right to keep it secret?"

"I do not understand."

"If Charles comes to England, it will mean civil war," I cried; "it will mean that the whole country will be in turmoil. If the Pretender succeeds in his design, a reign of ignorance, bondage, and oppression will curse the country."

"Tell me your reasons for saying this," she replied.

"Are you a Catholic?" I asked.

"I do not know," was her answer. "I suppose so. I was trained in a convent school, but I have been told that my father hated the Catholic religion, and I know that he would hate nothing that was good. I am but an ignorant girl; I think I

must have purposely been kept ignorant." This she said plaintively.

"Let me tell you of these Stuarts," I cried. "Let me relate to you what Charles I. and Charles II., as well as James II., have done for England."

I spoke eagerly; I told of the profligacy of the Stuart court, of the wanton extravagance, and of the corruption of the race. I had proceeded but a little way in my story, however, when I heard a quick footstep outside the door, and immediately after an old man stood in the room.

"Is anything the matter, Adam?" cried Mistress Nancy.

"Yes, dear lady," answered he; "Colman Killigrew, his son Otho, and others are nearing the house."

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN THAT UNCLE ANTHONY WAS MORE THAN A DROLL.

As may be imagined, Adam's message excited me much. What purpose had Colman Killigrew in coming to Restormel so late at night? And Otho, what was the meaning of his being present? Had either of them any suspicion of my whereabouts? For myself I had but little fear, but what of Nancy?

I looked eagerly into her face, but she was perfectly calm and composed. Evidently she knew no fear

"Can you think of their reasons for coming?" I asked.

"I think I can guess." Then turning to Adam she said: "You will, of course, admit them?"

"I must, my dear young lady," replied the old man, "I must. I should do no good by refusing them, and I should arouse suspicion."

"True."

"Of course it will take some little time"; this he said meaningly.

"Yes, yes. He will think you are in bed. And where will you put them?"

"All right, my dear young lady," he replied mysteriously. "You need not fear," he went on, "they shall never know that you are here."

"No, I can trust you for that, Adam"; then her eyes rested on me.

"Master Roger Trevanion is as safe as you are," he said quickly.

"You are certain?"

"Perfectly."

"That will do. We will stay here until you come."

The old man bowed and left us, and Mistress Nancy gazed steadily into the fire for some time as though she were ignorant of my presence.

"Master Roger Trevanion," she said presently, "I did not know you cared so much for your country. In the past you have seemed indifferent as to what king reigned, Catholic or Protestant."

"Until I knew you I was practically indifferent," I replied humbly. "I cared for little be-

sides my own enjoyment. In a way, I was a loyal Protestant, and would have fought for King George; but it would have been for self-advancement chiefly, and—and because I loved a fight."

"And now?"

"You have made me ashamed of myself in more ways than one," I replied.

"And you do not wish a Stuart to return to the throne?"

"He would curse the country."

Again she was silent for a few seconds, still gazing steadily into the fire.

"Would you play the spy?" she asked presently.

"No," I replied roughly. Then I started, for I heard the clang of a bell resounding through the empty house.

"Not for the sake of King George?"

"I would rather some one else did it," I replied.

"But if no one else would do it, or could do it?"

I was silent.

"And if thereby you could possibly save your country from a great calamity?"

"I am not a mole," I replied. "I cannot burrow in the ground. I like to fight in the open."

At that moment we heard the sound of voices, among which I recognized that of old Colman Killigrew.

"We need not be alarmed," she said. "The Killigrews know nothing of this room." Then she sat gazing into the fire again, while I fell to wondering what was in her mind.

"You said just now that you wanted to serve me?" she said presently.

"Yes, yes," I whispered eagerly.

"Would you play the spy in order to save me from calamity?"

"Do not put it that way," I said bitterly; "but I would do anything that a gentleman could do to serve you. You have made me love what is honourable, you have made me hate that which is mean."

"Would it be mean to discover the plottings of my enemies?" she asked tremulously.

"No, no," I answered eagerly. "Such a work would be worthy of any man. Command me, Mistress Nancy. Tell me of the man who has plotted against you, and I will go to him and tear his secret from him."

"Wait!" was her answer.

At this moment I heard a low rapping at the door.

She wandered slowly around the room for some minutes speaking never a word; then turning to me suddenly she said:

"Follow me if you would serve me."

She touched a spot on the door, and immediately it swung on its hinges. I followed her into the passage, and up a long flight of stairs."

"Whither are we going?" I asked presently.

"To a secret place in the house," was her answer; "you will be safer there."

"But you told me I was safe yonder."

"Will you not trust me?" she said. "You said you would serve me."

I followed her without another word. Had she told me to go to my death, I think I should have obeyed.

Presently she opened the door of an apartment.

"Enter there," she said; "do not make a sound of any sort. Wait in perfect silence until I return."

I entered.

"You can trust me, can't you?" she whispered.

"Yes, yes!" I answered. "I will obey you to the very letter."

"Mind, make no sound. Do not move."

"Very well. Are you not coming with me."

"No. Walk four paces into the apartment. Make no sound."

I did as she commanded me; then I heard the door close and I was left in perfect darkness.

I waited minute after minute in silence, wondering what she meant by such strange conduct. Under other circumstances I should have tried to get a light, and have examined the room in which she had left me; but I had given my promise, and I would abide by it. Besides, was I not doing this to serve her? I called to mind the rapping I had heard while we had been in the other room; that was doubtless a signal between her and Adam.

How long I stayed there I know not. I was like one stunned by a heavy blow; my mind was bewildered—everything was as confused as a dream. Sometimes I thought I *was* dreaming.

Presently I heard a sound of approaching footsteps. Several people seemed to be coming straight to the spot where I sat. Had Mistress Nancy been mistaken? That she had in any way betrayed me was not to be considered. I saw no

light, but I could hear footsteps and voices plainly. A few seconds later, it seemed to me that people were so near that I had need only to stretch out my hand in order to touch them. All the same this could not have been. No one had entered the apartment, of that I was sure.

"Now then we can get to business."

It was old Colman Killigrew who spoke, and his voice sounded strangely near. He might be standing close to my ear.

"We have need, and that quickly."

I gave a start. The voice was Uncle Anthony's, and he spoke as one having authority. Instinctively I stretched out my hands, but I touched nothing. Why were these men's voices so plain?

"How many swords can you command?" asked Otho Killigrew.

"In twenty-four hours, a thousand," replied Uncle Anthony.

"And Hugh Boscawen hath five thousand," was old Colman Killigrew's rejoinder.

"Yes, but where be they? Here, there, everywhere. He hath gone about this work like a fool. No method—no order. Besides he is ignorant of what we know. To-night is Wednesday. To-morrow night at this time Charles lands at Veryan Bay. We must meet him with a thousand men. Then must we go silently to Tregothnan, and make Boscawen prisoner. When the true king lands, and Boscawen appeareth not, the very men who would have fought against us will be for us. Besides, is not the man John Wesley a papist? True, I have not seen him, but rumour hath it

that his followers long for the return of a Catholic king."

"You depend too much on rumour, Father Anthony," said Otho moodily.

"What say you?"

"That I have ceased to trust you," replied Otho boldly. "I cannot forget the part you have played in the flight of Nancy; or in your treatment of Roger Trevanion. It is well to have that matter settled. We trusted you, and you failed us; but for you Mistress Nancy would have been my wife ere this."

"And you would have regretted it to your dying day. Think you I am a fool, Otho Killigrew?"

"Why should I have regretted it?" asked Otho sullenly.

"Time will show, my lad. He who weds a loveless wife must have sufficient reasons for doing so."

"And were not my reasons sufficient?"

"They were built upon thistledown, Otho Killigrew."

"Why did you not tell me this?"

"Because you chose to act without me, or rather to act against me. Have you not known me long enough to be sure I would do nothing without purpose. Bah! you thought you were very wise. You got Trevanion imprisoned, you tried to arouse suspicion concerning me, and then like a fool you visited him at Launceston Castle."

"But that has done no harm. He has escaped."

"True; but before he did so, you proved his

innocence to Hugh Boscawen, and obtained a warrant for his liberty. Now we have no hold upon him. He hath gone, whither I know not. His whereabouts is as great a mystery as that of the maid Nancy herself."

"Then you know not where she is?"

"I know nothing. I have been busy doing other work, or I might have set to work to discover. I know Trevanion took her to Peter Trevisa's."

"To Peter Trevisa's! Why?"

"Because—well, Peter Trevisa knows more of Nancy Molesworth, aye, and of this very house and the lands surrounding it, than you do. Peter Trevisa holds everything like that!"

"Ah!" cried Otho Killigrew.

"Enough of this," cried old Colman Killigrew, "all that can wait now. More pressing matters come first."

"I know it, Colman Killigrew," replied Uncle Anthony; "but this son of thine thinks he is very wise in suspecting me and in seeking to thwart my purposes. It is well to prove to him that he is a fool. He should learn to obey before he seeks to command."

"Well, and the other matter; is all ready?"

"It is. That is why I have ordered you here to-night. We must make this our centre. The house is isolated and practically uninhabited but for the man who obeys you implicitly. Here we can speak freely. There is a lonely road leading from the house to the sea; we can come and go without suspicion at least for three days."

"Why three days?" asked Otho.

"I say three days, because I do not know what is in Peter Trevisa's mind."

"What of him? What hath he to do with it?"

"I cannot tell yet; when Charles hath landed, and starts his march through Cornwall and Devonshire, I, the old hermit, may have time to think of other things."

"You are right," replied old Colman. "And now there is work to do. The men must be gathered."

"They are being gathered," replied Uncle Anthony.

"And armed."

"That is being done. If our work is done silently through the next two days all will be well. Our great danger is that Hugh Boscawen shall hear of it. If he does, we are lost."

"You speak strongly," said old Colman Killigrew; "you speak strongly, Father Anthony."

"Because I feel strongly. I tell you much depends, very much depends on the next few days. Oh, I know! Have I not gone around to almost every house in the county? Have I not worn a dozen disguises? Have I not wormed my way into the confidence of the faltering, and given courage to cowards? Here I have been a droll, a story-teller, there a priest hearing confessions and commanding service. To many a man I have gone who longed for the true faith and dared not confess it, and to each I have brought hope and courage. Many and many a night have I sat in my lonely hiding-places thinking, thinking of this

time and preparing for it. To-day, through my labours, and I make no boast, there be fifty heads of houses in this county ready not only to do battle themselves, but to lead their dependants, who but for me would have timidly cried, 'Long live King George II.' This I have done quietly, secretly. Pronounced Protestants have scarcely suspected it, and Hugh Boscawen, fool that he is, thinks the whole county is loyal to those German usurpers."

"I know you have worked hard, Father Anthony," replied old Colman Killigrew. "Many and many is the hour that you and I have talked concerning these matters at Endellion; through you we are a strong chain, whereas without you we should have been loops of iron which have no connection."

"And no one knows of the coming of Charles Stuart?" asked Otho Killigrew.

"Not yet; it is not well. We must be silent; silent as death. Still if we are wise there will be no need to fear. There be many thousands who are true to our cause. Let Charles come, let the people see him at the head of a few hundred men, and they will flock to his standard as sheep flock together at the sound of the barking of the shepherd's dog. All the same, this Hugh Boscawen, this Viscount Falmouth must not know, for, fool though he may be, he hath much power."

All this I heard, scarce thinking of what it meant. All was so sudden, so mysterious. But when Uncle Anthony finished speaking, the purport of it all flashed upon me like light. I saw,

or fancied I saw, Mistress Nancy's purpose in conducting me to this room. She wished me to know the plans of these men; she knew, too, of the cunningly contrived arrangements whereby the sound was conveyed from one room to the other. All the same, I liked not the thought that she had made me an eavesdropper, although, doubtless the two rooms had been constructed by the Molesworths for some such purpose as this, and they were honourable men.

I dared make no sound, for by so doing I had put myself in extreme danger, and I could not get out. So I sat there while they unfolded their plans, the gist of which I have here written down. Truly my bargain with Peter Trevisa had led me a pretty dance, and yet, but for the motive thereof, I did not wish matters otherwise.

Presently they prepared to depart, for the which I was truly glad, for my limbs were becoming cramped. I dared not move, for I reflected that sound would be conveyed to them as clearly as to me, and by and by, when I heard their retreating fo tsteps, I started up with great relief and stretched my long limbs with much comfort.

After a long time, for so it seemed to me, I heard a scratching at the door.

"Come," said a voice which I had learned to know, although it spoke but in a whisper.

I hurried towards the door, and saw in the dim light the face of my love. After that, and without speaking a word, I followed her into the room where my meals had been brought. When

the door was closed, I looked into her eyes eagerly.

"Well?" she said questioningly.

"You led me there for a purpose," I said.

I thought I saw laughter in her face.

"Adam is a wise old man, and knows the house inch by inch; knows its history, its secret places."

"And he led them there with an object?" I persisted.

"You refused to play the spy, Master Trevanion," she whispered with a low laugh, "and yet——" and there she broke off without finishing the sentence.

"Mistress Nancy," I cried, "you are sure you are safe here?"

"Have you not had proof?"

"Then I must away!"

"Away?"

"Yes. I have heard strange things. I tell you I must leave the house this very hour."

"But why?"

"Can you not guess?" Then I knew that although she had not heard a word, she was aware of the subject of their conversation. Her face I thought grew paler, and her hands trembled slightly.

"They do not know where I am," I went on, "neither have they any clew to your whereabouts. They do not guess you are here, but I must away. Can I have a horse?"

"No, no, it is impossible. There are many men about the house. They are watching everywhere."

"Then I must away on foot."

"Is it urgent?"

"Let me tell you all I heard," I cried; "for their every word came as plainly to me as if I sat in their midst. The Pretender is to land at Veryan Bay to-morrow midnight."

"So soon?"

"Ah," I cried, "that was the secret which Peter Trevisa wished you to impart? You had heard that he intended landing in Cornwall?"

She did not speak, but her silence told me of many things.

"I go to Tregothnan," I cried. "I go this very hour. Adam Coad must let me out. Surely he knows of the secret ways."

She hesitated a second; then she said: "No, Adam must know nothing of this. I will conduct you. But you are sure it is right to tell Lord Falmouth."

"It is more than right," I cried; "I shall perchance save the country from civil war."

She looked at me as if in great doubt.

"But if the Catholic faith is the true one," she cried, "and if Charles Stuart is the lawful heir to the throne—then——" and her lips trembled piteously as if she were in sore straits.

"I am no great hand at theology," I said; "but I know that Popery is lies, oppression, cruelty, ruin! We have had enough of it in England. If the Pretender lands and Hugh Boscawen is taken prisoner, it will mean brother fighting against brother, perhaps father fighting against son. The whole country will be in tears. We shall

have the rack, the thumbscrew, the faggot back again. As for the Stuarts, they have proved themselves to be a race of scoundrels."

I spoke warmly, for now that I was brought face to face with facts, I saw everything in a new light. The earnestness of my race rose up within me, and even then I felt ashamed of the useless life I had lived.

"Are you such a Protestant, then?" she asked.

"All my race have been for two hundred years," I cried; "and the reign of a Stuart will mean a deathblow for all who try to uphold liberty and truth."

"But you will be in great danger."

"I must go nevertheless. Guide me, Mistress Nancy, and that quickly."

I pulled on my boots as I spoke, and buttoned my coat closely around me.

"Yes, yes," she replied, eagerly. "But you will need arms. Wait; I will fetch you sword and pistols."

In a few seconds she had returned. "This is a sword which my father wore," she said, her voice trembling.

My heart leapt wildly. She could not scorn me, if with her own hands she had brought her father's sword.

"I will use it for no unworthy cause, Mistress Nancy," I cried. "I will strike no blow for anything which your father would condemn."

"Come, come," she said. "Adam showed me the way only a few days ago. Come! But you will be careful?"

Again my heart seemed to burn within me. It may seem but little to the reader, indeed the matter was trivial, yet I rejoiced beyond measure to think that she was anxious for my welfare.

I accompanied her along an underground passage, then we climbed some stone steps, and presently I stood by a low doorway. Taking a key from her pocket she unlocked the door, which opened into a dark shrubbery.

"You see that path?" she whispered.

"Yes."

"It leads to the woods. I can tell you no more. But be careful; there are watchers all around, for the Killigrews are not yet gone. God be with you!"

"Good-bye, Mistress Nancy."

"No, only good-morning."

"And you will be careful, Mistress Nancy. Do not let them see you. If I did not think you were safe I know not if I could go—even now. But when I may, I will come back, I will serve you with my whole heart."

"I am safe, go—but be careful. Good-morning. When you return come to this door and give three knocks."

I rushed up the path she had pointed out, and heard the door close behind me as I went. I had not gone far, however, before I saw a dark form moving among the trees.

"Who goes there?" said a voice.

I made no reply, but rushed on.

"Stop or I fire."

At this I made a sudden halt.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OTHO KILLIGREW USES AN OLD PROVERB.

THERE was no help for it. I had to wait till the man came up.

"All is well!" I said, in a low voice.

"But who are you?—why——!"

Before he could speak again or raise his musket. I struck him heavily. He fell like a log of wood, senseless, inert. I lifted my hand to strike again; but it is hard striking an unconscious man, and I refrained. Besides I felt sure it would be some time before he would regain his wits again, meanwhile I should be perhaps a mile on my way.

I therefore left him lying there, while I sped through the woods like a deer. Who he was I knew not, but I suspected that he was some follower of the Killigrews, who watched while his masters discussed their plans within the house.

I had but a vague idea of the right direction, for the trees were dark and high, and I was not much acquainted with this part of the country. Nevertheless, being country-bred, and having often to travel by night, I did not fear going far wrong. In half an hour I reached a lane, and then I took my bearings.

Listening, I heard the splash of the waves on the sea-coast near. This I knew lay southwest, so I was able to choose my direction without difficulty. Tregothnan lay a good many miles southward; I heeded not the distances, however,

my one purpose was to reach Hugh Boscawen's house without mishap. Once out in the open country the night was not dark, and I felt no weariness. My fear was that Otho Killigrew should overtake me. I was sure that the man I had struck down would relate his adventure, and that Otho Killigrew, in spite of what Uncle Anthony had said, was as clever as the devil himself. Moreover, as I rushed on, I could not help believing that the man had recognized me. Possibly he had come from Endellion, and had seen me there. This lent wings to my feet, for should Otho and his satellites follow me on horseback, I should be in a sore predicament. Presently my fear became a terror. If the man had recognized me, and had revealed the fact to the Killigrews and Uncle Anthony, would they not connect my presence with Mistress Nancy? For a moment my heart ceased to beat, but presently comfort came. My love, in spite of her youth, was no simpering, helpless chit of a maid. She would know how to hold her own; with old Adam as her friend she could outwit all the Killigrews. Then another thought came to me which assured me much. I was confident that Uncle Anthony was the maid's friend. I called to mind a dozen things which had happened during the time I was with him on Roche Rock. I remembered the way he spoke when he was left wounded and helpless in the old chapel in the parish of St. Mawgan. Their purposes might be one with regard to the Catholic faith and the coming of Charles Stuart, but I felt sure that the mysterious

old man loved Mistress Nancy, and that he loved not Otho Killigrew.

This made me feel kindly towards him, and although I had it from his own lips that he had been spending his life in preparation for the coming of the Pretender, I thought of many plans whereby I might be able to help him, if I reached Hugh Boscawen.

While these thoughts passed through my mind, I rushed on with unabated speed. The morning had only just begun to dawn, and no one had molested me. I therefore began to have hopes that I should fulfil my mission without mishap. Just as I caught the first glimpse of the rising sun, however, they were rudely dispelled.

I had at this moment just reached the brow of a hill, and saw the entrance gates to one of the roads which led to Hugh Boscawen's house. They were not much more than a mile distant, and I fancied that, once inside them, my dangers would be over. By this time, as may be imagined, I was sore spent, for I had run a great part of the way. I therefore contented myself with walking down the hill towards the gates, but had not gone far when I heard the sound of galloping horses. Turning, I saw two men riding towards me. They were Otho Killigrew and another man.

I started to run, holding my sheathed sword in my left hand, but I saw that such a course would be useless. They were evidently well mounted, and I was spent and weary. Each side of me great hedges towered up, covered with hazel

bushes. If I tried to escape into the fields by climbing over one of them, they would shoot me like a dog.

"Stop!" cried Otho.

For answer I cocked one of the pistols Mistress Nancy had given me. At least I would fight to the very last. Otho saw my action, and a second later two pistol-bullets whizzed by me, one tearing the sleeve of my coat. Evidently both of them had fired. Perhaps the movements of the horses had caused them to miss their aim. My hands trembled because of my long journey, otherwise I was fairly calm. I fired at Otho. Seeing my action, he spurred his horse furiously, and my bullet just escaped him—instead it struck the horse of the man who accompanied him. This made the animal rear and plunge mightily, and a second later the fellow lay sprawling on the ground. The horse, however, after some capering, galloped madly away.

"Come," I thought, "this is good work," and lifting my other pistol I shot at Otho's steed, rather than at its rider. I thought the bullet struck the animal, but Otho was a better horseman than his companion. He kept his seat firmly.

I had now no weapon save my sword, for there was no time to re-load, so I started running again, taking as many turns as a hare in the road, so as to give Otho as little chance as possible to take aim. Another bullet whizzed by, and still I was unharmed. I wondered how much ammunition he had, and in spite of my danger I hoped that I should come well out of the business. For if it

became a question of swords, I had no fear. Otho was no swordsman, while his companion, as far as I could judge, was only a common serving-man, who would have but little knowledge of fencing.

I heard another pistol shot, and at that very moment I felt something strike my side and burn me, as though a red-hot knife had been placed on my flesh.

In spite of my struggles to stand upright, I stumbled and fell. In falling I struck my head against a stone which stunned me somewhat.

"Ah!" I heard Otho say, "that is well. Come, Juliff, we shall soon settle this business."

In spite of my fall I kept my eyes open, and saw Otho dismount. He seemed in great good humour, for he laughed aloud, while his companion limped slowly after him. He drew his sword as he came near me, and never did I see such a look of devilish gloating as rested on his face at that moment. The man seemed utterly changed. He was no longer the slow-speaking, almost religious-looking man I had known. His eyes burned red, and he laughed in such a way that for the moment I forgot the burning pain at my side.

"It is my turn now, Roger Trevanion," he said, and his voice fairly trembled with passion. "And he who laughs last laughs best. You have beaten me many times. Oh yes, I'll give you your due. You've beaten me many times. You are a man with brains, that I will admit, but so is Otho Killigrew. You got away from Endellion and took Nancy with you, that's once; you mastered

me at the inn up by St. Mawgan, that's twice; you got away from Launceston Castle after you knew I should gain your freedom, and that's three times. And now my turn hath come!"

These last words came slowly, and seemed to pass through his set teeth; this I noticed, although I was still somewhat dazed by my fall.

"You are in my power, Master Roger Trevanion," and he held his sword close to me, "and now before I make you swallow six inches of steel, I will tell you something else: Mistress Nancy Molesworth is in my power too. And this I will add: Otho Killigrew's intentions are no longer honourable, for reasons that you can guess as well as I."

There was such a fiendish tone in his voice, and his words gave me such a shock, that my strength came back to me as if by a miracle. Before he could hinder me I had at one bound leapt to my feet and drawn my sword. The pistol shot no longer hurt me one whit; my right arm felt no weakness.

"They do laugh best who laugh last," I cried; whereupon I attacked him violently, and as he was no swordsman he fell back from me.

"Juliff, Juliff," he cried, but Juliff was so crippled by his fall that he was no longer able to help his master. Then a strange light came into his eyes, and his guard became weaker and weaker, until I wondered what it meant, for all the Killigrews were fighters in one way or another.

I do not say that Otho Killigrew was not a brave man. In the ordinary meaning of the word, he

knew no fear, and could meet death as bravely as another. But directly he knew that my wound was not mortal, and that I had retained my mastery of the sword, he became a schemer and a plotter again. In short, the Otho Killigrew who thought I was powerless and the Otho Killigrew whose sword clashed against mine were two different men. Keeping one eye on me, he gave a glance at Juliff who had dragged himself to the hedge side. Evidently the man had broken some limb in his fall from the horse, for one arm hung limp, and he groaned loudly.

For my own part I had no mercy in my heart, and I had made up my mind to kill him. That I was able to do this I had no manner of doubt. As I have said he was no swordsman, and although my side ached sorely, the sinews of my right arm seemed like steel bands. But for those words he had spoken about Nancy, I should have contented myself with disabling him by a flesh wound, but remembering what he had said, I felt I could be satisfied with nothing less than his death. I think he saw this as he looked into my eyes; for his face became pale and ashen; and he gasped like a man whose throat is nearly choked.

"He who laughs last laughs best," I repeated grimly, and then he was certain that he would get no mercy from me.

He was not like his brother Benet. That giant would never dream of yielding, his one thought would be to fight to the very last—but Otho, as I said, had again become cool and calculating. Doubtless he remembered how much depended

on him, and thought how the cause he loved needed him. Anyhow he took to his heels, and ran rapidly in the direction of Restormel.

"Coward!" I shouted, as he left me standing in the road. "Coward! Otho Killigrew," I repeated again, as soon as I had gained my breath, but he took no heed of my taunt, and indeed I was sorry afterward that I uttered it.

I was master of the situation, however, and taking no thought of Juliff who lay groaning by the hedge side, I caught Otho Killigrew's horse, which had not been hurt by my pistol-shot, and jumped into the saddle. My side pained me sorely as I did this, and now that my danger was over I felt somewhat faint and dizzy. Indeed, I doubt much if I should have been able to have walked to Tregothnan, for the house was several miles beyond the lodge gates.

No difficulty presented itself with the gate-keeper. He had just risen as I came up, and when I told him that I had important business with his lord, he made no ado in allowing me to enter. When I neared Tregothnan my heart beat fast, for I remembered the circumstances under which I was last there. The old man at the door gave a start, too, as he saw me, and I felt sure I was recognized; but seeing the eager look on my face, he bade me enter, and told me he would inform his lordship of my presence.

Evidently Hugh Boscawen was an early riser, for in a few seconds he entered the room where I stood.

"I have heard strange news concerning you, Master Roger Trevanion," he said as he entered.

"But not so strange as I have to tell you, my lord," was my reply.

He gave a start at my words. "What ails you, man?" he asked, "you are wounded, your clothes are bloody."

"Of that presently, my lord," I said hastily. "Know you that the Pretender lands at Veryan Bay to-night, and that the lovers of the Stuarts have a thousand men armed to receive him?"

He started back like a man who had received a prick with a sword. "What mean you?" he cried.

I repeated my words, and gave him further particulars.

"You are sure of this?"

I assured him that I was.

"I would that Sir John Grenville were here," he said to himself, "this is sore sudden."

"There is need of immediate action, my lord," was my reply, "and the country looks up to you."

My words seemed to arouse his mind to activity.

"Ah," he cried, "now they will know that I was right. Men laughed at me for saying the Pretender would ever think of landing in Cornwall, and jeered at me for gathering together our brave Cornishmen. But how came you to know this, Trevanion?"

He seemed to have forgotten that I had lately been brought before him as a traitor, forgot that Otho Killigrew had been my accuser.

"I will tell you all I can, my lord," I replied. "I escaped from the Witch's Tower, at Launceston Castle. I knew I was innocent, and I felt that there were those outside who needed me."

"Yes, Killigrew came to me. He proved your innocence. I signed a warrant for your liberty. But you escaped—that I know. But it is no matter; go on."

"I was led to Restormel."

"What, the old Castle up by Lostwithiel?"

"No, to the seat of the late Master Molesworth."

"Ah, yes, I remember. Well?"

"Colman Killigrew of Endellion is the guardian of Master Molesworth's daughter; hence he is practically master there."

"Yes, I have heard as much."

"While I was in the house, Colman Killigrew and his son Otho, with others, came. It is regarded as a good centre for dealing with the Pretender's cause. I overheard their conversation."

"Which you have told me?"

"Partly. What I did not tell you is that they fear you greatly. They know you have gathered an army from various parts of the country. Their idea is, that after the Pretender lands to-night they will come here and take you prisoner. They believe that, when this is done, the very men you have armed to fight for the king will fight for Charles."

"Ah!" he cried; "but King George will know of my wisdom now! And you, Trevanion, you escaped, and came here to tell me. Hath no one any suspicions?"

"They have more than suspicions, my lord. On leaving Restormel a few hours ago, a man stopped me. I silenced him for the time, but he

must have given information; anyhow, I was followed. Doubtless messengers were sent out to scour the country-side, but two only overtook me."

"Two?"

"Aye, Otho Killigrew and a serving-man. They were on horseback and I on foot."

"Were you armed?"

"I had a couple of pistols and a sword." Then I told him of all that had happened.

"Then you have a bullet in your body?"

"I think not, but I have a slight wound. I think I should like a doctor," and, indeed, at that minute my head seemed to whirl most amazingly, and there was a noise in my ears like the sound of many waters.

After that I remember little that took place, at least for a long time; but presently when hours later my senses came back to me, I felt vastly better.

"It was lucky we had a doctor staying in the house," said Hugh Boscawen. "Trevanion, you will have to lie quiet for many days."

"No, my lord," I replied, "that is impossible. I must away. There is much to be done."

"I must ask your forgiveness, Trevanion," said Hugh Boscawen, mistaking my meaning. "I trusted in Killigrew, such is the power of a smooth tongue. I see now that the King hath none more faithful than you. But you have done your part; in fact, methinks you have saved the country. Now you can rest. I have made all arrangements, and my trusty henchmen are scour-

ing the country. When Charles arrives at Veryan to-night we will give him a warm welcome. In a week from now he will be in safe custody. Heard you whether the French will be sending troops with him?"

"I judge not. I gathered that he would come practically alone."

"That is well. Now you may safely rest."

"No, my lord, I cannot"; and thereupon I told him in a few words of my relations with Mistress Nancy Molesworth. Of my love I said not a word, but beyond that I told him everything.

"This shall be looked into when this affair is blown over, Trevanion," he said. "Such a maid as she should not be robbed of her rights through some foolish flaw in our laws. But what would you?"

"I must find out what hath become of her, my lord," I said, for I remembered Otho Killigrew; "moreover, there is a matter which may have escaped your attention."

"What matter?"

"The friends of the Pretender will now know that I have informed you of their plans, and I am sure that Otho Killigrew would not have run away as he did had not some cunning plan entered his fertile brain. Believing that you are aware of what will happen, they will act accordingly."

"But they did not know that you heard their conversation?"

"Perhaps not; but they will suspect, and be prepared."

"Well, what then?"

"I think, my lord," I said, "that they will doubtless have signals whereby they will be able to communicate with the Pretender. If he is to cease being a danger to the country, he must be allowed to land, and then taken prisoner."

"I see; you have a good brain, Trevanion. But that shall be attended to. I will give orders at once."

"Still I cannot rest here, my lord. I must be up and doing. And I feel quite strong. I can go to Restormel; I must go!"

He saw I was determined.

"You shall hear what the doctor saith," was his answer. "Ah! but it was rare good luck that the fellow was staying here."

A minute later the doctor came into the room. He had come from Truro to bleed one of the serving-maids, and had been obliged to stay all night.

"Master Trevanion had better lie still for a week," was his reply to Hugh Boscawen's query. "True, the wound is not deep, and I have bandaged it well, but severe movement will cause it to start bleeding, and then there may be trouble."

"But it will not be dangerous for me to move?" I said. "I feel quite strong."

"I do not use the word dangerous," replied the surgeon, "and you feel strong because by giving you a most potent medicine of my own invention you have had several hours of refreshing sleep. Moreover, my remedy hath had the effect of keeping your blood cool and of energizing your vital powers. It is really a most remarkable cordial,

and did I live in London, I should soon become the most famous of living physicians."

"Then if the cordial be so potent," was my reply, "and if the wound is not deep, it will surely be safe for me to travel. For, in truth, it will do me more harm to be imprisoned here than to do what I feel must be done. Had you been an ordinary doctor, and knew not of this cordial, it might have been dangerous, but surely not after I have been under your treatment."

After a long harangue I managed by flattering the doctor's vanity to get away; all the same it was not far from dark when I, with many doubts and many misgivings, rode in the direction of Restormel.

I had barely reached the lodge gates when I saw two men riding towards the house from which I had just come. One was dressed as a squire of the old school, and the other as an ordinary serving-man. I looked steadily into his face as I passed, and, although it was in many respects strange, I thought I recognized it. When he was out of sight, I asked the gate-keeper if he knew who it was.

"He gave his name as Master John Polperro," was the reply.

CHAPTER XXV.

HOW JANUARY CHANGED TO JUNE.

Now I had never seen the elder John Polperro, but I remembered his son, and as I rode along I thought how unlike the two men were. So unlike were they, indeed, that no one on seeing them together would suspect them to be related. I paid but little attention to this, however, but rather set to wondering why he was going to see Hugh Boscawen. Had news of any sort reached him? Knew he aught of the plots afoot? After this I felt certain I had seen the man somewhere. Some of the features I could not recall; but the eyes and the protruding brows above them were not ordinary. The possessor of those keen gray penetrating orbs was not of the common type of humanity.

"Where have I seen those eyes before?" I thought; and then my side burned and ached fearfully, just as I had felt it immediately after Otho Killigrew had shot at me. My blood also coursed madly through my veins, and I became much excited.

"'Uncle Anthony!" I said aloud, and I was sure I was not mistaken.

Presently I cooled down again, and I was able to think calmly. Here then were the facts. He was visiting Hugh Boscawen under the guise of the elder John Polperro. He had, doubtless, become acquainted with the success of Otho's search

after me, and had gone to Tregothnan to confer with the master thereof concerning the coming of the Pretender. Moreover, I was sure that he would not go there unless some subtle plan had formed itself in his cunning old brain. I knew that Hugh Boscawen was no match for him, and that unless he were checkmated the King's cause would perchance be ruined.

This being so what ought I to do? My first impulse was to ride back to Tregothnan and inform Hugh Boscawen of my conviction; but I refrained. I remembered the kind of man with whom I had to deal. Uncle Anthony would know of my coming, and would naturally guess that I had penetrated his disguise. This would allow him time to resort to other means in order to carry out his purposes. After this I thought of writing a note to Boscawen, telling him to arrest Uncle Anthony; but this I could not do. I remembered the old man's kindness to Nancy, I thought of the evident love he had for her. No, no—I could not do this, even although I knew him to be the most dangerous plotter in the country. And yet I dared not allow him to have his way with the man who was championing the cause of the reigning king. After much thinking, therefore, I wrote a note in the gatekeeper's lodge and commissioned the man to take it to his master. This is what I wrote:

"*Act as though your visitor of this morning, who gives his name at your lodge as John Polperro, had not called. I have powerful reasons for this. At*

the same time listen to him as though you desired to fall in with his plans. His information is not trustworthy, of this I am sure.

"ROGER TREVANION."

This note I reflected would frustrate Uncle Anthony's designs, but would not lead Boscawen to arrest the old man or do him any injury. So I mounted my horse again and rode northward. I had no definitely formed plans of my own, except that, despite the danger, I would go to Restormel and seek to find Mistress Nancy. I could not help believing that Otho Killigrew, notwithstanding the critical work he had to do, would still find time to hunt down my love and work her harm. That he knew of her being at Restormel was manifested by what he had said to me, and I was sore afraid. Moreover, I had promised Hugh Boscawen that I would meet his men in the woods, near the only spot a boat could well land, at Veryan Bay. He had, he told me, arranged with his henchmen that they should gather as many as possible of those who had taken up arms for King George at this place, and that they should come as far as possible, stealthily and after dark. His hope was that, though the information I had given him came very late, at least two thousand men would be lying among the woods at eleven o'clock that night.

As I have said, the danger was doubtless great in going to Restormel. If the Killigrews could get hold of me I should fare badly. And yet this very danger might make my entrance possible.

They would never think I should venture there that night, and thus they might be unprepared for me. Moreover, I hoped that they would all be away at Veryan Bay, regarding the welfare of a hapless maid as unworthy of their notice.

Anyhow, I made my way towards Restormel, and having fastened the horse I had taken from Otho to a tree some distance from the house, I crept silently towards it. No light shone from the windows, no sound reached my ears. Seemingly the place was deserted.

I strained both ears and eyes without avail; it would seem as though no form of life existed behind the dark walls of the house. Did not this mean that Otho was still ignorant of the whereabouts of Nancy? Might she not be still safe and well in that part of the house, the secrets of which were unknown to the Killigrews. I had reason to know how self-reliant and far-seeing she was, and I knew how faithful and shrewd was Amelia Lanteglos her serving-maid. My heart beat loud with joy at the thought.

Creeping nearer and nearer the road, I determined to try and find the door from which I had come early that morning. It was hidden by evergreens and difficult to find, but I fancied that if I went there and knocked, either she or old Adam Coad would come to me. In any case, I hoped I should hear news concerning her, for, as may be imagined, my heart was torn with many fears, especially when I remembered what Otho had said.

Presently I stopped, for I heard approaching

footsteps; they came not from the house, but from the lodge gates. I listened intently, and before long heard the murmur of men's voices.

"You join us not then?" It was Otho Killigrew who spoke.

"No, I am no fighter. I do not see what I should gain now that the affair has gone so far; besides it matters not to me who is king."

I detected young Peter Trevisa's voice, and instantly my mind was on the alert. What had these two worthies been planning? I remembered that Treviscoe was but a few miles from Restormel. Had Otho been visiting the Trevisas? If so, Nancy had been the subject of their discussion.

"But the other matter is settled?"

"Yes."

"Then good-night. I have much to do ere midnight. But I can trust you? And you can trust your men?"

"To be sure. They will do aught that I tell them."

"Mind, if you betray me or fail me——" this was spoken in a threatening voice.

"I will see that my part is done, if you do yours."

"And I will."

The men separated. Their words conveyed but little meaning to me. That together they had concocted some plan concerning Nancy I was sure.

I saw Otho stand still, as if thinking deeply, after young Peter Trevisa had gone; then he

made his way towards the shrubbery through which I had come early that morning. Silently I followed. I ill liked the part I was playing, but I thought of my love, and determined that I would do all a man could. For my love grew stronger each hour, even although I had no hope that she I loved cared aught for me. How my heart hungered for some token of a possible affection for me no words of mine can write. Again and again I tried to comfort myself with the thought that did she not care for me more than ordinary she would never have braved the dangers of helping me to escape from Launceston Castle, that she would not have been so anxious for my welfare. But I remembered again how she had told me that what she had done for me she would have done for any one who rendered a service. Nevertheless, I knew that if she could never care for me, I had still given my life to her, and that until my limbs lay cold in death I must seek to serve her. For when a man who is past thirty really loves for the first time, it is love forever. True, I loved my country, and I had espoused the cause of liberty and truth, because I could not help it, but Nancy's welfare was more to me than these.

Thus I could not help following Otho Killigrew, and although my wound pained me, I knew that strength would not fail.

Presently Otho walked down the very path along which I had come, and made his way towards the door which Nancy had thought secret. Evidently he knew the road well, for he hesitated not. Having reached the door, he knocked three

times, just as Mistress Nancy had told me to knock. What did this mean? How did any one know of this?

I did not spend much time in surmising concerning the matter, for I knew that Otho would have many ways of finding out things unknown to most men.

The door opened as if by magic. I heard no footsteps nor noise of any sort. Evidently the sound of his knock must have reached some one who knew the secret of the opening thereof.

Without hesitating a second he entered, and immediately the door closed behind him, leaving me outside. At this moment I knew not what to do. I dared not make a sound, for I knew not who might be near. Perhaps a dozen men might be lurking near the house, and if I made a noise they would shoot me down like a rabbit or take me prisoner. And yet I longed to know whither Otho went. I wanted to understand his purpose in entering. I reflected that Nancy must be within. If the Killigrews had not discovered that this was her hiding-place, she would naturally remain there as she had said, and if they had found her out, no place could have served their purpose better. Had she opened the door quickly, thinking it was I who had knocked? Had she been expecting to hear my footsteps? The thought filled me with joy even in spite of my anxiety; and yet I stood among the shrubs powerless and alone.

Presently I heard the sound of voices. I could detect no words, but I knew people talked near me. Their voices became louder and louder, and

by and by a cry like that of a woman in pain reached me. This came from within the house, and once I was sure I detected Otho's voice, not soft and gentle-spoken as was generally the case, but harsh and strident.

How I restrained myself I do not know. Indeed I feel sure I should have attempted to break down the door had I not seen it open, seemingly without hands, as it had opened before. A minute later Otho appeared again. He did not look around, but hurried along the crooked path between the shrubs. Now and then I heard him laugh in his low guttural way, as though he had won a victory. He passed close beside me, so close that I could easily have stabbed him to death before he had time to defend himself. Why I did not, I do not know. Since then I have wished that I had. But I have always loathed striking an unprepared man. So I let him go, and shortly after I heard the sound of a horse galloping northward.

When these sounds died away, I made my way to the door, and knocked three times, even as Otho had knocked. But without effect. Although I listened intently no sound of any sort reached me. The noise I made echoed and re-echoed through the house, but no notice was taken. Again I gave the signal agreed upon by Mistress Nancy and myself; but the house might be empty for all the answer I got.

Now this troubled me sorely, for I was afraid lest my love should have suffered some ill at the hands of Otho, and the closed door made it impos-

sible for me to render any help even if it were necessary. But I would not be baulked. Rather than go away in suspense I would break down the door, even though I brought the whole race of the Killigrews to the spot.

I therefore struck the door loudly, and although I thought I detected some sounds of movement within, I still remained outside. So I put my shoulder against the iron-studded barrier and pressed hardly, and although it yielded somewhat the bolts held firmly. My action, however, must have told those within that I was determined to enter, for at this time I heard footsteps coming towards me.

"No, you ca'ant come in," said a voice from within.

"Amelia—Amelia Lanteglos," I said aloud.

"Wait a minnit, Maaster Roger Trevanion," was the reply, spoken as I thought excitedly, almost feverishly. Then a bolt drew back and the door opened.

"Forgive me," said Amelia Lanteglos, "but I thought it was—somebody else. Where did 'ee come from, sur?"

"I can't tell you now, Amelia," I said; "is your Mistress safe?"

"Saafe. Iss, sure; but she've bin purtly frightened."

"Yes."

"Maaster Otho mimicked the knock. Three times ya knaw, and I opened the door. She ded think t'was he knockin' again."

"That is why I was refused admittance?"

"Iss, sur, that's ev et."

"Can you take me to your mistress now?"

"Iss, sur; come this way."

I followed the maid along dark corridors in perfect silence, she muttering and laughing in a strange way; I feverishly excited, my side paining me sorely, yet feeling no weakness.

Presently she stopped, and then knocked timidly at the door of an apartment.

The only response that I heard was a piteous cry and a sob.

Amelia knocked again.

"I do not wish to be seen. I will not open the door. You can force your way in if you dare, but you do not come here again with my consent."

And now there was nothing plaintive in the tones of her voice, it was rather angry—defiant.

"I'll maake sa bould as to oppen the door," whispered Amelia; "she do think tes Maaster Otho," and without further ado she suited the action to the word, I entered the apartment, and Amelia left us together.

A lamp stood on the table, which was in the centre of the room, so that I could see my love plainly. She stood as far away from the door as possible, and her back was turned upon me. I caught sight of one of her hands, and saw that the fist was constantly clenching and unclenching itself. Evidently the poor maid was sore distraught, and the sight of her sorrow rendered me dumb.

"Do you think, Otho Killigrew," she said

slowly, still keeping her back towards me, "that you can change my mind? You say I am in your power, and that I have no friend to help me; well, if you had a spark of manhood in you, you would cease to molest me, for you would know that your very presence is loathsome. Now go, and leave me to find what peace I can."

Her words filled my heart with joy and sorrow at the same time. Joy, because it was not I who was loathsome to her; sorrow, because she stood there helpless and alone, and because I felt myself unable to help her. And thus all I could think upon to say, and that in a very husky voice, was:

"Mistress Nancy."

She turned herself round quickly, and I saw her eyes gleam with the fires of hatred and anger. Her face was pale and hard, her whole body was rigid; but as her eyes caught mine, a change came over her as quick as a flash of light. In a second her eyes became soft and humid, her hands became unclenched, her form lost its rigidity, and a rosy flush mantled her face. It was as though a cold cruel night in January had changed to a smiling June morning.

Her lips parted to speak, but she only uttered one word, but that word opened the gates of Heaven to me.

"Roger!"

It was a cry of surprise, of infinite relief, of untold joy.

I opened my arms. I could not help doing so, and I am sure she saw that my eyes burned with

the fires of love. I took two steps towards her, my arms still extended.

"Nancy," I said.

Then she came towards me and fell upon my shoulder.

"He told me you were in the power of the Killigrews," she sobbed, "and that to-night you would die."

I held her to my heart a moment, knowing nothing, understanding nothing, save that I was in Heaven. I had never hoped for this. Did such a mad fancy enter my mind, I had dispelled it as something as impossible as Heaven might be to a lost soul. Oh! but I never knew the meaning of life or joy until that moment. She my dear, dear maid, lay with her head pillowed on my shoulder, while her shining hair mingled with my own unkempt locks.

"And did you care?" I said like one in a dream, for truly my joy made me unable to say the words that were wise.

At this she started back, like one ashamed. I saw the tears trickling down her cheeks, and a look which I could not comprehend come into her eyes.

"Oh, it is you, Master Roger Trevanion!" she cried. "Forgive me, I—I did not know. I think I—I am overwrought. You will pay no heed to the foolish words and action of—of one—who—who knew not what she was doing."

But I was eager, fearless, determined now. Knowing my own unworthiness as I did, I could not forget the look in her eyes as she uttered my name.

"Nay, Nancy, my love, turn not away?" I cried.

"But—but—I must—I—I did not know. Oh! what must you think of me?" she sobbed like one ashamed.

"I think you are the best and purest maid God ever sent on earth," I answered. "I—I—O my love, come to me again!"

But she stood still, her hands trembling and her bosom heaving.

"You—you must forget my foolishness, forget it forever," she said wildly. "I was so afraid, I did not know what I was doing!"

"No, I shall never forget it," I replied, "never, never! A man cannot forget Heaven, even though he may have felt it only while he draws one breath. O my dear, dear maid; come to me again. I love you better than name, home, liberty, life. I have never dared to tell you before. I am so unworthy, but I love you, love you!"

"But, but——" she cried piteously.

"No, no," I said, "let there be no buts. I cannot bear that you should turn away from me now. I have loved you for many weary, weary days—hopelessly, hopelessly. I dared not tell you till now—but do not repulse me."

"And do you want me—really want me? That is, you—you do not despise me because——"

"Mistress Nancy—Nancy, my dear one," I said, growing bolder each moment, although I wot not what to say, for truly my love made me as foolish as a child, "all my life is bound up in you; I care

for naught but you, and I mind nothing now you are near me. Even my wound hurts me not one whit now."

"Your wound?" she cried. "What wound?"

"Oh, it is nothing," I answered, vexed with myself for being such a fool as to mention it; "my side was only grazed by the pistol-shot."

"What pistol-shot? When? Where?"

"It was only a scratch—this morning—when—when Otho fired at me this morning."

"Then you are hurt, you are wounded?"

"No, not now. O my love, will you not come to me?"

Then she rushed to me. "But, but you are not—that is, you are not——"

She did not finish the sentence, for she lay sobbing on my shoulder again, just as a babe might sob on its mother's breast.

"And do you care?" I said again. "Oh, will you not speak to me once more? Will you not tell me what—what I long to hear?"

"You are safe—that is, you are sure you are not hurt—that is very badly?"

"No, no; I mind nothing. I am quite well. I shall be happier than words can tell if you—you will only tell me you love me."

"I—I am afraid I told you too soon," and this she said with a laugh that had a sob in it, but the sob contained no sorrow, and still I was not satisfied.

"But my love, tell me," I cried, "tell me really, for I shall never be content until I hear the words from your own lips."

"Oh, I cannot, I am so ashamed," she sobbed. "I did not mean you should know until you—had first told me—that is,—O Roger, I am so happy!"

And after that I could doubt no longer, for she lay in my arms contentedly and as if she knew no fear, and then I cared for nothing. The dangers which surrounded me I minded no more than the old knight in armour might mind the threats of children, for although I was homeless and nearly friendless, my heart throbbed with a joy which until then I never believed possible.

"Roger," she said again presently, "I am so ashamed, but I could not help it, and—and I *am* happy; but—but—tell me again what you told me just now."

CHAPTER XXVI.

I FALL INTO OTHO KILLIGREW'S HANDS.

How long we remained oblivious to everything save our new-found love I know not, for truly I had entered upon a new life. My dear love had revealed herself to me in a way which made the dark night seem like day. I had known her as one fair beyond words, it is true, and more faithful and courageous than I had believed a woman could be, but distant and often cold and repellant. Even when she had braved many things for my welfare she treated me with distant formality, such as had chilled my heart and made me despair of ever winning her love. But this night she had shown me her heart, and now

I knew her not only as noble and pure, but as tender and winsome and loving. Many and many a time did she raise her dear face to mine and bid me tell her again and again that my wound was not dangerous and that I suffered no pain. And because I loved her so, I am afraid I told her what was not true, for the wound ached sorely, although I minded it not one whit. In very truth, one look from her eyes dispelled the thought of pain, and I felt the strength of many men surge within me. To say that I was content would be to play with words, for sitting there with my love nought but joy filled my life.

Presently, however, she bade me tell her of my experiences, and this I did briefly, for I wanted to know what had happened to her, and why Otho Killigrew had visited her and what he had said to her. Besides, it had come to me that I must take her away from Restormel, although for the moment I knew not where. In my happiness, too, I had almost forgotten the promise I had made to Hugh Boscawen, and that it was my duty to make my way to Veryan Bay that night.

"What did Otho tell you, my love?" I asked.

"That you have been taken prisoner by his people, and that you were to be put to death to-night, unless——"

"But that was nothing," I answered. "What was his purpose in coming to you?"

"He had discovered, I know not how, that you were here last night. He had also found out the signal by which I was to admit you."

"How?"

"I know not. He had also divined—oh, Roger! I must be very foolish, but he had divined that—that——"

"What, my dear maid?"

"That I love you," and she hid her face on my shoulder again, as though she were ashamed to show her face.

"How think you so?"

"He told me so, and—and I could not deny it."

"No," said I with a glad laugh, "and then?"

"He tried to trade upon my love. He said you were in his power, and that unless I promised him something you should die this very night."

"What was that?"

"To marry him."

"And you?"

"I was sorely frightened; but I told him that I would rather die than do this. I could not, you know, Roger, even though I did not know you cared aught for me."

"But you must have known I loved you, my dear."

"Sometimes I thought I did, and at others I could only—that is—even were I sure you did, I knew you would rather die than that I should wed him."

"Well, let us hear the rest of this," I said. "Surely Otho must have been attending the performances of some travelling showman, for such plots smack of a fourth-rate playhouse."

"He sorely frightened me, for he threatened to torture you; and you know what a cruel face he has."

"Well, and what was the end of it?" By this time my heart began to grow bitter towards Otho Killigrew, and had he been there at that moment it would have gone hard with him.

"He told me that you had been taken to a place of safety, and then asked me if I would allow him to take me there. He said it was the only condition on which he would show you any mercy."

"And you?"

"I refused him again. And yet I fancy my looks must have consented, for, Roger," and she nestled closer to me again, "I hoped that I might be able to help you."

Now this matter required thought, for I felt sure Otho had some deep-laid purpose in it all.

"He said he would return as soon as his duties allowed him," she added presently.

"Here?"

"Yes."

"You will refuse to admit him?"

"Oh, there will be no need now—you will be here;—that's—no—no—you must not. He seems to have discovered all about the house, and even old Adam Coad obeys him. If he finds you here he will find means to kill you."

"You need not fear," I said; "to-night all the Killigrews will be prisoners, and before long they will be hanged," and I told her what was being done.

"Then he cannot come back here to-night?"

"No, he will not be here. All the same, let every door be bolted. But I must away."

She looked at me piteously. She was so changed,

this maid Nancy, during the last hour. All her reserve, all her coldness had gone.

"But I will be back before morning," I said, "and then——" I stopped, for my heart grew cold. In very truth, I seemed helpless. She seemed to divine my thoughts, for she concluded the sentence.

"I shall have no care. And yet," and this she said sadly, "O Roger, I cared naught about this—this story of Trevisa's till to-night. If it is true, I shall be dowerless—nameless. I shall take every thing and give you nothing—that is—nothing but —myself."

The last words came coyly, and yet with a sob, and for the moment I cared nothing, even the loss of my old home weighed no more than thistledown. But only for a moment; my destitution rested heavily on me a minute later.

"It is all well," I cried in a tone of confidence I was far from feeling. "Even although Trevisa's story be true, I shall have—but there is not time to tell you now. Wait for me, my love. No harm can come to you to-night—and I will soon be back. I will not knock this time; you may know me by this cry," and I imitated the hoot of a night bird.

Soon after I rode away with a light heart in spite of my cares, and my many doubts. I knew nothing of Otho's plans, and for aught I could tell he might have spies all around the house; but no one molested me. Indeed although I listened carefully all was silent as death, and I concluded that the Killigrews had mustered all their

forces in order to be ready when Charles Stuart landed.

When I reached Veryan Bay all was silent. It was perhaps ten o'clock, only two or three hours before the Pretender was supposed to land, but not a soul was visible. I rode across country in order to avoid coming into contact with any of the friends of the Stuarts: for I knew that were I caught it would mean instant death. Every footstep was, I was sure, beset with danger; for while Hugh Boscawen had given me a passport whereby I should be safe among his followers, I knew not where the enemy might be lurking.

Presently I reached the woods just above Veryan Bay, and with as little noise as possible crept along under the trees. A few seconds later I was surrounded by armed men. They had been lying quietly amidst the brushwood until orders for action came. No sooner was my passport seen than I was conducted to Hugh Boscawen.

"Saw you that old man?" I asked.

"Yes, but not until I had first received your letter."

"Well, what did he say?"

"He seemed weighted with important news at first, but presently he talked of the most senseless matters."

"Ah," I said, and instantly I surmised what it meant. Uncle Anthony had guessed that I had penetrated his disguise, and had sent a message.

"Did you see him immediately on his arrival?"

"No, I had many things to occupy me, and I

kept him waiting some time. Your letter prepared me for the foolish things he had to say."

"All your arrangements have been carried out then?"

"Yes; one thousand men lie in this wood and a thousand more on the other side of the valley. It was all I could raise on such short notice. But they are enough. The Pretender's friends have got wind of my prompt action. They have abandoned the idea of coming here. I am sorry, but it does not matter; the craft containing Charles is on its way, and he will be here in a few hours."

He tried to speak coolly, but I could see that he was excited beyond measure. His voice shook, and was fairly husky.

"How do you know that they have abandoned the idea of bringing their forces here?"

"My spies discovered it," he said shortly. "Oh, I have not been idle, young man; my men have had eyes and ears everywhere."

I realized then as I felt when at Tregothnan that he seemed to resent my questions, and I knew that his abilities did not equal his zeal. I could quite believe that the Killigrews had abandoned the idea of meeting the forces which Hugh Boscawen had gathered, but I did not believe that they would submit so meekly as this man seemed to think. As far as I could judge, matters were ill-arranged, and although every one was on the tiptoe of expectation, there seemed to be little definite idea as to the serious issue at stake.

"You see," he went on, "such a number of men could not be got together so secretly as I had

hoped. The Pretender's friends found this out, and not a man of theirs is to be found within two miles. Of that I am sure."

"And do you think, my lord, that they will give up so easily?" I asked.

"They cannot help themselves. I tell you the coast is guarded two miles in each direction."

"No more than two miles?"

"Is not that enough, Trevanion! I tell you I saw through the whole business ten minutes after you brought the news. You shall not be forgotten, Trevanion, I can assure you that."

"I suppose neither Sir Richard nor John Rosecorroch are here?"

"No, there was no time to get advisers; besides it would have confused matters. One general is enough."

I felt impatient with the man, loyal and well-meaning as he was. I remembered that he had paid but little heed to me at Tregothnan. Doubtless during the hours I had been lying asleep through the day he had given his orders, and in his own way had made ready. But he did not know the resources of Colman Killigrew or Uncle Anthony, to say nothing of Otho.

"Have you considered, my lord, that they may still signal to Charles Stuart farther up the coast?"

"What mean you, Trevanion?"

"Doubtless the Pretender set sail from the north of France, and is sailing down the Channel. Think you the Killigrews have not prepared for the present state of things? They have been too long plotting not to realize their danger, and

they will not allow Charles to walk blindfold into your hands, especially now they know what hath been done. They will either have moved their forces farther up the coast, or if that be impossible they will have warned him not to land."

"I tell you their forces have been disturbed. They have heard of what has happened, and they have lost heart. As for the other, it is a dark murky night, and no signal could be seen from afar."

"But there is danger, my lord," I persisted; "and you would not like Charles to escape you?"

"No, by heaven, no! but what would you suggest?" and here the man revealed the fact that he should have taken counsel in the affair.

"I would suggest this, my lord. Give me a few men. I know the coast well; I will go northward, and if they are seeking to signal, either I will send you word, or, if I am able, take these Killigrews prisoners."

"The plan sounds well, Trevanion. It can do no harm, and it shall be done. Do you ride northward as you suggest."

Now all along I had been a free lance in the business. Lord Falmouth, of whom I have spoken as Hugh Boscawen, because our county people preferred this honoured old name to the title which had first been given to his father—Lord Falmouth, I say, had insisted that I was not in a fit condition to render him active service because of my wound. In truth, as I have before intimated, he urged that I should stay for some time at Tregothnan, and although I had managed to per-

suade him as to my fitness to travel and to meet him at Veryan Bay, I knew practically nothing of what he had done. That he should have been able to secure such a large number of men at such a short notice was indicative of his influence in the county. As far as that matter goes, there was no man better known or more respected, while the name of Boscawen was held in reverence from Land's End to the banks of the Tamar, and even beyond it. At one time he was believed to have much influence in Parliament, and no small amount of power over King George himself. But I, who am not a politician, cannot speak with authority on such matters. Of his kinsman, the great Admiral Boscawen, and his prowess, all the world knows. But Hugh did not possess the admiral's genius as a commander, and I could not help seeing, ignorant as I was in all matters pertaining to warfare, that the matter seemed sorely bungled, because of a failure to understand how wily Uncle Anthony and the Killigrews were.

However, I rode off with a few men, and found my way with all diligence along the coast. As Boscawen had said, it was a dark, murky night, and it would be difficult to see a signal from afar. I dared not ride very near the coast, as many parts of it were dangerous; indeed it was with difficulty that we made the journey at all. The country was thickly wooded, and pathways were few.

I had gone perhaps four miles beyond the spot where Boscawen's men lay, keeping a sharp look-

out on the coast all the way, when I stopped the horses and listened. We had been riding through fields and by the side of hedges, so as to make as little noise as possible, and I had commanded a halt because I thought I saw two or three dark forms not far away. For some minutes we listened in vain, but presently I heard the sound of footsteps coming along a lane near by. Creeping silently to the hedgeside, I could detect the noise of three men coming from a northward direction.

"It's all up," I heard one say.

"Yes, we'd better get as far from these parts as possible."

"I suppose a big fire has been lit up by Chapel Point!"

"Yes, that was the signal agreed on in case of danger."

"Do you think they'll see it? It's a beastly night."

"If they can keep it up long enough."

"Ah, yes; if they can do that the vessel will turn back."

"I suppose so."

The men passed on, and I heard them discussing the situation as they trudged in the direction of St. Austell; but this was all that came to me distinctly. I had heard enough, however, to confirm my suspicions. My plan now was to send two men back with the news, and then to ride on to Chapel Point, a spot some distance farther north.

Half an hour later I was near enough to Chapel Point to see the ruddy glow of a beacon light, and

I became sadly afraid lest Hugh Boscawen would not be able to send men in time to extinguish the fire before it was seen by the Pretender. Indeed, so much did my fears possess me that I could not remain inactive, and so, foolishly, I crept nearer and nearer the danger signal. I was drawn on by a kind of fatal fascination, and so excited did I become that I recked nothing of the danger by which I was surrounded.

It soon became plain to me that the spot was well chosen. A huge fire was lit on the slope of a hill, and thus the blaze, while hidden from the neighbourhood of Veryan Bay, could be plainly seen by any who sailed down the Channel. In the ruddy glow, too, I could see many forms; and as I thought how much depended on extinguishing the blaze before it could be seen by the rebels, I had difficulty in restraining myself from rushing thitherward single-handed. Indeed I did, in order to watch their actions more closely, leave the men who accompanied me, and this, as events will show, almost led to my undoing.

I had not been away from my companions more than a few minutes when I was roughly seized, and even before I had time to cry out I was dragged away into the darkness. How far I was hurried on I scarcely know; but presently when I was allowed to stop, I found myself surrounded by a dozen or more men, amongst whom I detected Otho Killigrew and Uncle Anthony. I could plainly see them, for the light from the fire threw a ruddy glare upon us. We stood in a hollow, however, and were partially sheltered.

"Ah, Roger Trevanion," said Otho Killigrew, and his voice was husky with savage joy. "I did not think we should meet again so soon."

"No," I replied as coolly as I was able, "and you would not care to meet me now if you were not surrounded by a dozen of your followers."

"I always like playing a safe game," he replied slowly as was his wont.

"Even although you have to be a coward; this morning you ran away from me like a whipped schoolboy."

"I had matters of more importance to perform than to kill a ruffian," he replied.

"Apparently," I said, with a laugh I little felt, "but you miserably bungled your matters."

My words evidently stung him.

"Have a care, Roger Trevanion," he said. "This morning we both used a well-worn proverb—'he who laughs last laughs best.' I think that applies to me, for in a few minutes you will have gone to that place where there will be little laughter, and where you will be in company with the personage who describes himself as travelling to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it."

"Scarcely," I replied. "You could never be happy without your constant friend and master."

I heard Uncle Anthony chuckle in his quiet way, but Otho went on still in cold, cruel tones:

"I have not yet decided what death you shall die. I think, however, that I shall increase the brilliancy of the light yonder by using you as fuel. It will be excellent preparation for you too."

"That would be just like you," I said; "you are too great a coward to try and kill me in open fight. However, let's have done with it as quickly as possible."

I said this, I must confess, with difficulty; my throat was dry, and even then I could almost feel the fire burning my flesh. At the same time I knew that such words would make him desire to prolong my agony, and, in truth, his devilish desire to taunt me and make me suffer saved my life.

"All in good time, Roger Trevanion," he said coolly. "There is no hurry for a few minutes, and the devil can wait. I have a few things to tell you, too. I have had some slight training for the priesthood, and I wish to give you a few comforting messages before you depart, just as a priest should."

"Go on," I said grimly, but indeed I was sore afraid.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOW BENET KILLIGREW AND I FOUGHT IN THE LIGHT OF THE BEACON FIRE.

"Of course you expect no mercy from me?" said Otho presently.

"I know you are too good a pupil of your master to dream of such a thing," I replied, and even as I spoke I wondered how long it would take the messenger I had sent to reach Hugh Boscawen,

and whether help could arrive before Otho had completed his designs.

"Be careful, Roger Trevanion," he said bitterly.

"Why?" I asked. "I know you will do your worst whatever may happen. Say your say, man, and unless you gag me I shall say mine."

"Yes, I will say my say. Oh, I know what you are thinking. Well, we have sentinels in every direction, and the moment there is a sign of any friends of yours coming, we shall be warned, and that moment you shall die."

My heart sank as he said this. For although I do not think I fear death more than another man, I did dread the cruelty of this man. Besides, I longed for life; never, indeed, had it been so sweet to me as now. Only a few hours before my dear maid Nancy had laid her head on my shoulder and had sobbed out her love to me. I knew, too, that she would have a bitter enemy in Otho, and if I were dead she would be a prey to his many wiles. Still I determined not to betray fear. At any rate, he should not have the comfort of making me plead for mercy.

"Then say on," I said, "your thoughts can give you little comfort; you have been outwitted, beaten all along the line. I can die, but not before I've drawn your teeth."

"Except that Charles will not land."

"If that is any comfort to you, except that."

"We may as well add another thing," he sneered; "but I will refrain, because it refers to a lady."

I was silent.

"Oh yes, I have touched you at last, have I? Well, let me give you a little comfort in that direction. The lady shall be well looked after."

I looked at Uncle Anthony as he spoke, and saw the old man's face twitch. In spite of myself I was comforted. My dear maid was not without one friend.

"Perhaps I will refer to that again presently," he went on; "you will be glad to hear her name in your last minutes. But let me tell you another thing: Roger Trevanion, I hate you."

"Doubtless," I said with a sneer.

"I hate you," he went on, and now he spoke quickly and passionately. "I hate you because again and again you have beaten me, and I never forgive a man who has done that. You have outwitted me—yes, I will admit it—and have made the only woman——" he stopped a second as though his passion had led him to commence a sentence which he did not know how to finish. "God is tired of you," he continued presently, "for you have hindered the true king from coming back to England, and with the true king the true faith. We owe our failure to you."

"Yes, you do," I replied, "you do. You thought to restore the fortunes of your dying name. Religion is little to you. How can it be? But the failure of your plans to bring the Pretender here is the deathblow to your hopes. To succeed you have lied, you have played the spy; you have bartered friendship, and all things good and true. Well, I have beaten you. You can

take a paltry revenge by killing me, but you cannot undo the fact that I have beaten you."

I felt a savage joy in saying this, for at that moment I cared for nothing.

"You will not fight as a man should," I went on. "When it comes to open blows you run away like a coward. You prefer plot and intrigue, and lies in the dark."

"It cannot be said that you are guiltless of plot and intrigue, either," remarked Uncle Anthony quietly.

"I have been obliged to use my enemies' weapons," I replied; "but I have betrayed no man, no woman. I have sought to hurt no man. Nay, I have ever tried to befriend rather than to harm."

"I know more about you than you think," remarked Uncle Anthony; "and at one time I should have been sorely disturbed at doing you harm, so much did I believe in you. It is little use deploring the inevitable. I am too old a man to give up because of one failure, or to cry out because God seemeth against me. But why did you interfere, Roger Trevanion? You, the gay spendthrift—you, who have cared but little for aught save your gaming and your revelries. Why did you not live your life, and let others deal with matters of serious import? Religion is naught to you. It is everything to some of us."

"Because the society of a pure woman made me ashamed of myself," I cried; "because she made me remember my name, my race, and my duty to my country and to God."

The old man sighed, while Otho spoke apart with two or three of the men.

"Methinks I had better have killed you this very evening," he said; "my hand was on the trigger of my pistol."

"When we met?"

"Aye."

"And I might have had you arrested," I replied. "I recognized you in spite of your disguise. I wrote a note to Lord Falmouth warning him that no reliance could be placed upon the information you might give. I might have added your name."

"So you might," he said quietly, and he seemed in deep thought. "Then this danger signal would not have been seen," he added.

At that moment we heard the sound of a gun coming from across the waters.

"Ah!" cried voices all around me; "they have seen the danger signal. Now we must leave."

"But not before I have dealt with Roger Trevanion," cried Otho Killigrew; "now, you fellows, do my bidding."

"Not that, by God, no!" cried one of the men, "let him die as man should. I'll have naught to do with roasting."

"But we owe all our failure to him," cried Otho.

"You have your own private grudge, no doubt," said another. "Kill him as a gentleman should be killed. Hot lead, cold steel, or the water, I don't mind which, but not that."

I looked around as well as I could, but Uncle

Anthony had gone, and I saw that there was a movement among the men who had waited by the fire.

"Then it shall be cold steel," cried Otho, and he drew his sword from his sheath.

If it be possible to realize a sense of satisfaction at such a moment, I realized it then. At any rate, I was not to suffer the cruel torture which Otho intended. Indeed, I doubt whether my mind could have withstood much longer the strain I was undergoing. For the last few days my life had been one constant excitement. Every nerve was strung to the highest pitch, and although my wound was neither deep nor dangerous, it had pained me much.

"They laugh best who laugh last," said Otho, coming to me grimly, "and I shall laugh last, I warrant you."

"Be quick, then, and do your devil's work!" I cried aloud, for I was sore wrought upon. "I cannot touch you, I am bound, so you are safe. But I would to God I could die at the hands of a man, instead of a revengeful cut-throat."

"No, you shall die by my hand," said Otho, slowly and grimly.

"No, by Heaven he shall not!" cried a voice near; "whatever he is, Trevanion is a brave man, and he can fight. I would I had known you were here sooner. Ah, I love a man who can fight! Cut the ropes, men, and let him die as a man should!"

It was Benet Killigrew who spoke, and I saw his eyes fairly gleam with savage joy.

"Yes, it is I, Roger Trevanion," he cried; "I told you we should meet again; I told you we should fight again. Faith, I almost forgive you for having spoiled all my old dad's plans; I shall have a fight after all, a real fight with a man who knows the use of a sword. Aye, but I love you, Trevanion. I love you!"

"Benet, this is not your affair," said Otho; "it was agreed upon that this fellow should be taken and killed at all hazards, and that I should see it done."

"I care not, Otho. He is a worthy gentleman, and he shall die as becometh one. Oh, you need not fear, I will kill him; but not as a butcher may kill a pig. Cut his cords, men. Nay I will do it myself. There, that's it. Stand up, Roger Trevanion. Ah! they have not taken your sword from you; it is well! Stand around, men; there is plenty of light."

For once Otho Killigrew yielded to his brother. Perhaps he was glad to do so, for while it may be easy to kill another in hot fight, a man must have lost his manhood if he willingly and in cold blood will kill another who is helpless and bound. Besides, Otho knew it to be dangerous to stay there. The king's men might come at any minute.

"Yes, I will leave you to my brother, Roger Trevanion," he said slowly; "I think I am glad he came. He saves me from doing dirty work."

"Very dirty," I replied.

"Aye," he said, "just as a hangman's work is dirty. Still it is necessary, and Benet is better fitted for it than I. And before I go, I will give

you a little information. I go to see a lady who is a mutual acquaintance. I will tell her how I left you. She will be much interested. You are about to take a long journey, and the end thereof will be dark. I wish you all the joy you can get out of it. I will tell our lady friend about it, as we caress each other and laugh at you."

"Coward," I cried, unable to control myself, "base, skulking coward. Come back and fight me," but he laughed in his quiet way as he mounted a horse that stood near-by.

"By the way," he continued, "you stole my horse, but Benet will make that all right. You will soon be in congenial company—and so shall I. Good-night!"

"You are right, Trevanion," cried Benet in almost a friendly tone. "Otho is a coward; he hath a way with him which drives me mad. Ah, but I love you. Stand around, men. Now draw, man"; and putting himself in a posture of defense, he made his sword whistle about his head.

"Had we not better get away to a distance?" asked one who stood by. "We can now do no good by staying, and we may be in danger at any minute."

"Nonsense!" cried Benet. "They will have heard the guns as well as we, and they will know what it means. The game is up, I tell you. Besides we can never find a better place than this. Here is green grass to stand on, and a rare light. Now, Trevanion."

I drew my sword and stood before him. Even as I did so I knew to whom I owed his coming.

It was Uncle Anthony who had told him how I stood. The old man knew his disposition, knew that fighting was the breath of Benet Killigrew's life, and was sure that it would be untold joy to him to do battle with me again. Perhaps he hoped that in some way I might be able to successfully defend myself. For the hermit felt kindly towards me, even although I had thwarted the hope of his life. Strange as it may seem, however, I had almost forgotten the greater issues at stake. While I had spoken with Otho and Uncle Anthony, and heard the mutterings of bitterness among their companions because their hopes had been frustrated, I felt that I had indeed taken part in a very important business, that, perhaps, I had changed the very life of the country. I had to some extent realized the bitter disappointment they must have felt, as well as their great anger towards me. But now my thoughts were narrowed down to smaller issues, and although just after I drew my sword I heard the dull boom of another gun resounding across the waters, I thought nothing of the rage that the young Pretender must have felt, or of what it might mean to millions of people.

My great thought was to sell my life dearly, for now that I was once more free I felt my own man again. I knew that Benet Killigrew was a great fighter, and although he had not been master in the past, I stood at great disadvantage now. I had been weakened by my wound, and my experiences of the last few days were not of a nature to fit a man to fight with such a swords-

man as Benet. All around me stood the dark angry faces of his friends, and I was sure that, even should I master my opponent, they would see to it that I should not escape alive. Still a man at thirty-two years of age is not easily conquered. He has not lost the hot blood of youth, and he has also gained the caution and the judgment necessary to use his strength wisely.

And this I determined to do. Most of the men who had lit the great beacon fire were gone, and I hoped that even in spite of my dark prospects I might still be able to keep my skin whole. I knew the man who stood before me. Passionate, daring, and strong as he might be, he had still the feelings of a gentleman. There was nothing cunning in his nature. He would fight openly, fight for the very joy of fighting. The ferociousness of the savage he doubtless possessed, but he had higher feelings as well.

"It gives me joy to meet you, Benet Killigrew," I said. "If I am to die, I shall be glad to die at the hands of a brave man, rather than to be butchered by one who knows not what a swords man ought to feel."

"Ah! good!" he replied, "it is not oft I can find a man who is worthy of standing before Benet Killigrew"—this he said with a kind of mountebank bravado peculiar to him—"and it gives joy to my soul to meet a man. I do not know much about who is the true king. I joined the business because there was a chance of a fight. But I am sick of it. No sooner was it discovered that there would be three to one against us than they all

showed the white feather, and so I was robbed of a rare bit of fun. But you have turned up, Trevanion, and by my soul I love you for it; and although I must kill you, because I have given my promise, I shall be fair grieved to do it."

"'At least we will fight as gentlemen," I replied, "and neither I am sure will take advantage of the other."

"That goes without saying," he cried; "but come let us begin, we are wasting time! Guard!" I must confess that all my own love for a fight was aroused in me at that moment, and I needed no further invitation. At the same time my policy was to act only on the defensive. I knew that Benet would be careful, and would throw away no chances.

I have thought since that the scene must in its way have been impressive. The great "danger fire" still cast its ruddy glow upon the dark faces of the men who formed a ring around us, while in the near distance the waves surged upon the rock-bound coast. It must have been far past midnight, and the winds played among the newly budding leaves which appeared on the trees in the woods nearby. Above the sounds of both wind and waves could be heard the clash of our swords and the sound of Benet's voice as we fought. For there was nothing cool and contained about this man. He could not help but express his feelings, and every time I parried his thrusts he gave a cry of pleasure and admiration.

"It is a joy to fight with you, Trevanion," he

would say; "By Heaven, you are a man! Good! Well parried!"

His eyes continued to gleam with a savage joy, and he constantly laughed as though he were enjoying himself vastly.

Presently, however, he grew more serious, for I was very careful. I contented myself with parrying, never offering to return his thrusts, and although he tried hard he could not so much as touch me.

"By Heaven, fight!" he cried at length, but that I would not do. My policy was to tire him out if I could, and then disarm him. This, however, was easier said than done. He fought on with savage pleasure, showing no weakness. His wrists seemed to be made of steel, and his eyes continued to shine with a passionate light.

We had been fighting for some minutes, when I thought it wise to change my tactics. I slowly yielded before him, and he thought my guard grew weaker.

"Ah!" he cried with satisfaction.

Just at that moment I heard a cry among the woods.

"It's the Boscawens!" cried one of the bystanders. "Quick, Killigrew, we shall be in danger soon!"

At this my heart gave a great bound, for hope grew stronger. I might live to see my dear Nancy again, and this thought nerved my arm. I thought of Otho's threat, and I longed to get to Restormel and see if my love was safe.

I still pretended to yield to Benet, and while

my guard was still sufficient, I made him believe it was growing weaker.

Another cry came from the woods, sharper and clearer.

"The signal!" cried the bystanders, "the last signal. We must be away."

"No, he yields," cried Benet, "and I promised to kill him, and I will keep my word. Ah!"

"But they will soon be here. Let us settle the business for you."

"No, by Cormoran, no! What! Benet Killigrew call help? I'll fight and kill him by myself though ten thousand Boscawens stand by!"

"But there is danger, man! If we are caught we shall be hanged!"

"Can't you see I am fighting!" roared Benet, still keeping his eyes upon me, and never for a moment thrown off his guard.

All the same, this talk was not to his advantage. It made him somewhat rash, and I knew that my chance had nearly come.

"'Tis they!" one cried presently. "Truscott, give me your pistol!"

"I'll kill the man who interferes," said Benet madly; "I promised that there should be no unfair advantage, and by Heaven there shall not!"

But his speech caused his own undoing. It was impossible for any man to fence well under such circumstances, and so I was able to use the chance I had long been waiting for, and his sword flew from his hand.

At that moment there was the tramp of horses'

hoofs and the shout of voices, and I knew that the bystanders became panic-stricken.

"We cannot go without killing him," cried one.

"No; very good, then"; and a bullet whizzed by my head, after which I heard retreating footsteps.

"Fly, Benet Killigrew!" I panted.

"No, by God, no!"

"Yes," I answered; "you had not fair play. "Those fellows confused you. We will finish another time. If the Boscawens take you, you will be hanged!"

"Will you fight again?" panted Benet.

"Yes; now begone!"

But it was too late. A dozen horsemen, headed by Hugh Boscawen, rode up to us.

"Safe and unhurt, Trevanion?" he cried.

"Yes, my lord."

"It is well. Have they all gone! No! At least here is one prisoner."

"No, I think not, my lord," I answered; "this gentleman and I have been settling a long-standing affair."

"Aye, but he is a rebel."

"Nay, my lord, let him go free," I said excitedly, for I could not bear the thought of Benet being treated as a rebel. "I will swear to you that this gentleman hath never plotted against the king. He is an honourable man; but for him I should have been dead ere this."

"But you were fighting with him."

"The fight was a private matter, my lord. I ask you for his liberty as a special favour. I will

give my word that he will never lift up his hand against the king's true subjects."

"I like not to refuse you anything, Trevanion," said Boscawen, "you rendered such signal service. Well, if the fellow will give his word that he will in no way help the Pretender's cause, I will for your sake set him at liberty."

"Aye, I will promise, gladly," cried Benet; "I hate the whole business."

"Then you are free," said Boscawen.

"Good!" cried Benet, "and, by Heaven, I love you, Trevanion; I love you! And I have your promise. Another time?"

"Yes, another time."

He took his sword, and laughed a great laugh. "It is well," he said; "I love you for a man, and you are more worthy of the maid Nancy than I."

He left then, and a few seconds later was lost in the darkness, for by this time the beacon fire began to burn low.

Of all that was said during the next half-hour I have but little remembrance. Many questions were asked me which I answered as well as I was able, and many things I heard which I was but little able to understand, for my mind was sorely exercised as to what had become of my dear maid. After a time, however, I was able to get a word with Hugh Boscawen alone, when I told him of what Otho Killigrew had said.

"We will go thither," he cried; "I myself will accompany you to the house. If we be quick, we shall be able to capture this fellow. He at least will be a valuable prisoner."

So as quickly as possible we set out for Restormel, but so anxious was I that I fretted and fumed at the delay in starting and the slowness of our journey.

Morning was breaking when we reached Restormel, and the sight of the house set my heart beating fast for joy, for I hoped that soon I should hold my love in my arms again. But sore disappointment was in store for me. We found the house empty save for Adam Coad and his wife. Neither of them knew where Nancy was. All the old man could remember was that they had heard a noise in the house, and when they had searched for his mistress she was nowhere to be found.

Again I remembered Otho's words, and then my overtaxed nature yielded to the continuous strain; I felt my blood grow cold and head grow dizzy. After that all became dark to me.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OTHO KILLIGREW'S LAST MOVE.

I SUPPOSE I must have been sorely ill, for consciousness did not return to me for some time, and even when it did I was much bewildered and sadly weak. My memory played me many tricks, too, and I have been told since that my words were wellnigh meaningless. Hugh Boscawen sent for the doctor whose drugs had done me so much good the previous day, and on his arrival I was put to bed, and after having drunk a large

quantity of the decoction he prepared, I became unconscious again. I suppose the stuff must have been a kind of sleeping draught, for although it was yet morning when I had been put to bed, daylight was altogether gone when I awoke. The room in which I lay was lighted by means of a candle, and by my side sat Mr. Inch the doctor.

"How long have I been asleep?" I asked.

"At the least twelve hours," and Dr. Inch laughed cheerfully.

"Twelve hours!" I cried aghast.

"Twelve hours, and verily I believe your life hath been saved thereby. I will now take away a little blood, and in a few days you will be well."

This he said in evident good-humour with himself, as though he had effected a wondrous cure.

"Twelve hours!" I cried again; "then Otho hath fifteen hours' start of me."

"I know not what you mean. My care hath been that you should have necessary rest and restoration. This you have had. You are much better now, are you not?"

"Oh, I am all right," I said, sitting up in my bed; and indeed I felt quite refreshed and strong. "But where am I?"

"At Restormel."

"Oh yes, at Restormel," and instantly I had grasped the whole situation. "And Boscawen, where is he?"

"Lord Falmouth hath had many matters of importance to deal with; he went away before I came, but left word, saying he would if possible return to you this evening."

"But did he seek to find Otho Killigrew; has he any knowledge of his whereabouts? Does he know where——"

I stopped then, for I remembered that Dr. Inch must have been ignorant concerning the matter which lay so near my heart. Still I could not refrain from asking many questions, although the doctor was able to give me but little satisfaction.

Just as I had consented to be bled, and was making ready for the operation, Hugh Boscawen came into the room. He had evidently spent a busy day, for he looked much wearied, but expressed delight at seeing me so well.

"Have you found them?" I asked, thinking of Otho and Nancy.

"They have all escaped, except one or two foolish varlets who know nothing about the business," he replied, mistaking the purport of my question. "But I do not despair. My men are scouring the country, and I have sent messengers to London with the news. And I have not forgotten you, Trevanion; I have not forgotten you."

"But Otho Killigrew and Mistress Nancy Molesworth, what of them?" I asked feverishly.

"I have heard nothing," was the reply, "nothing at all. I wish I could get him; he and that old hermit have been the brains of the whole matter. Still, do not be anxious, Trevanion; I will find him. He hath no friends in these parts, and therefore can have no hiding-place. The coast is being watched everywhere too."

"You do not know Otho Killigrew," I cried bit-

terly; "and it is no use telling me not to be anxious. As well tell a boat to sail steadily on a stormy sea."

"It is no use fretting. All that can be done shall be done. It should be easy to find him too, for we are all faithful to the king for many a mile around, and I have given strict orders."

At this my pulses started a-dancing again, for I remembered something of importance.

"How long hath it been dark?" I asked.

"But an hour or so."

"My lord, I must get to saddle again?" I cried; "and I think, if you will accompany me, you will be able to arrest Otho Killigrew."

"Good!" he cried, "but where, Trevanion?"

"But Master Trevanion must not rise," cried the doctor. "I must take an ounce of blood from him, after which he must lie still for three days."

"I shall need all my blood," I cried eagerly, and in spite of all the doctor's persuasions I was soon on my feet again and ready for action.

"Let me have some food," I said with a laugh, for I felt my own man again, and the thought of action eased my anxious heart.

Food was speedily set before me, of which I partook heartily, as every man should who has work to do, and while I was eating I told Hugh Boscawen my plans.

"Know you aught of Peter Trevisa?" I asked.

"But little," was his answer; "he is a man reputed to care for but little save his ugly son and his money bags."

"Have you ever been to Treviscoe?"

"Never."

"I have," I replied; "I believe Otho Killigrew is there. It is there he hath taken Mistress Nancy, I could swear it." And then I told him of the conversation I had heard between Otho and young Peter Trevisa.

"There is naught in that," remarked Hugh Boscawen, shaking his head doubtfully.

"In itself there is but little," I answered, "but connected with all else which I have heard there is much"; and thereupon I told him of my suspicions.

"It is worth trying for, anyhow," remarked Hugh Boscawen. "I will accompany you to Treviscoe. If he be there, it accounts for my inability to find him."

A little later we rode towards Treviscoe, which as I have said was no great distance from Restormel. We were well armed, and were also accompanied by several men, upon whose trustworthiness Boscawen said he could rely.

"You have paid no heed to Trevisa?" I asked of him as we rode along.

"No; Peter Trevisa hath in no way been under suspicion; besides, the place is so near Restormel that I did not think there was any need. I naturally set my men farther afield."

"But the coast hath been watched."

"Carefully."

At this my heart became heavy again, for I felt sure that Otho Killigrew could if he would devise plans whereby all Hugh Boscawen's followers could be outwitted. Still I trusted that the two

Trevisas, once having Mistress Nancy in their midst again, would not let her go without much hard bargaining, for I had suspicions concerning Otho's plans which will leak out presently.

"It will be well," I said presently, "if we enter Treviscoe secretly."

"But that will be impossible."

"To me alone it might be; but not to you. You hold the King's commission. You can command, you can enforce threats, you can insist on your own method of entrance."

"True," he replied proudly.

"Then I would suggest that you forbid the gatekeeper to communicate with the house concerning our entrance, and threaten him with a severe penalty if he disobeys. When we get to the house, command the servant to show us to the room where his master is—also with a threat, without letting any one know of our arrival."

"I understand. Yes, it shall be done."

"We must surprise them. If he have time to think, they will outwit us. We must make no noise; we must enter the house unknown to its masters."

"You speak wisely, Trevanion—perchance Trevisa hath had more to do with treason than we wot of," and by this speech he betrayed the fact that he had inherited much of his father's love for arresting people concerning whom he had any suspicions.

When we came to the lodge gate, the man let us enter without any ado as soon as Hugh Boscawen had mentioned his name. I knew, too, by

the fear expressed in his quavering voice that we need have no apprehensions concerning him. Our entrance to the house, too, was effected just as easily. We crept silently along the grass which bordered the way, and when I saw that no light shone from the front windows I surmised that old Peter, if he was within, was in the library, which was situated in a wing of the building in the rear of the main structure. This made our work all the easier. I knocked lightly, Hugh Boscawen standing by my side.

An old serving-man opened the door, and gave a start of fear as soon as he saw who we were, but my companion quickly brought him to reason; indeed so great was his reverence for the name and power of the Boscawens that he raised no protest whatever when he was told what he desired him to do.

"Utter no word to any one concerning our presence," said Hugh Boscawen impressively. "Show us the door of the room where your master is, and depart. These men of mine will stand here within call."

The old serving-man tremblingly acquiesced.

"Hath your master visitors?" continued Hugh Boscawen, still in a whisper.

"He hath, my lord; but he is loyal, my lord—loyal. Neither my master nor his son hath left the house these two days."

I knew this to be false; all the same young Peter might have met Otho Killigrew without the man knowing anything about it.

"Who are his visitors?"

"I do not know, my lord."

"Trevanion," whispered Boscawen to me, "I must serve the King. I must find out if there be any treason about."

"How?"

"All means are honourable in the service of the King," he replied. "We must listen."

I saw his eyes gleam with eagerness; if ever man was alert to his chances, it was he. I verily believe that nothing rejoiced him more than to punish treason.

We therefore crept noiselessly to the door, and soon my nerves were all a-twitch with excitement, for I heard Otho Killigrew's voice, and he was mentioning my own name, and I quickly judged that we had come at an opportune time.

"I never wished to be harsh to a lady," said Otho, "for that reason I allowed your maid to accompany you this morning; when I took you, I am afraid by guile, and somewhat unceremoniously, from the house you have thought to be yours. But all is fair in love and war. I have also allowed you to be alone throughout this day, but the time is come for the settlement of matters, and this time Roger Trevanion will not be able to help you."

"And is it true, that is—what you told me about him?"

It was my dear Nancy's voice, husky and tearful, which spoke; I gripped my sword-hilt, and with difficulty kept myself from bursting open the door. Hugh Boscawen held my arm, however, and motioned me to be still.

"To quote the great bard," replied Otho in a mocking voice, "he is gone 'to that country from whose bourne no traveller returns.' Trevanion sleeps with his fathers."

"Killed by your hand?"

"Nay cousin, not by my hand; by another's."

"Like Richard, the murderous king, you hire your murderer, I suppose."

"No; Trevanion died in a fair fight, died by my brother Benet's hand."

"In fair fight, you say. Where? when?" and her voice was tremulous.

"In fair fight; but we need not enter into details now. He is dead, and I am suspected to have left the country with the others who led this business—spoiled, I will admit, though Trevanion. But the end is not yet, and he will not spoil our plans next time. But there are other matters more important to me. My lungs pine for the air of France, and I ask you to come with me."

"No, I will not go with you."

"Think again, my cousin; for thus I will call you, although we are not related by law. We Catholics have always suffered—we suffer still. So unjust are the English laws to Catholics that you to-day have according to the law no name, no home."

"Then why do you persecute me?"

"Because I love you."

"I do not believe it. If you loved me, you would leave me in peace."

"I do love you, I offer you my hand in marriage. I offer you my name—an old name."

I heard a movement in the room, there was a sound like that of the rustling of a woman's dress. Then I heard my dear maid's voice again.

"Otho Killigrew," she said, "I know not what truth there is in what you say. I know you to be a liar. Again and again have you tried to deceive me. But I do not believe you would offer to marry me if I were nameless and penniless. You —you are too base."

"You mistake me, misjudge me, Mistress Nancy," said Otho slowly. "As I tell you, Roger Trevanion is dead; he died before sunrise this morning by my brother Benet's hand. And the other matter is also true. You have no name. Let the fact become known, and you would be a wanderer, a vagrant in the county, for none would give you a home. All children born out of wedlock are despised. But I love you, I would save you from being disgraced; I desire to give you my name, I will make you my wife. True, when I sought your hand I thought you were rightfully the owner of Restormel; but Peter Trevisa hath proved to me beyond dispute that you have no shadow of claim to it. But I love you!"

"This is true, my fair lady," and I detected old Peter's voice; "it is true. I have told you so before, but he!—he!" and he giggled feebly, "you know what you said."

"And if I marry Otho Killigrew, you will keep the matter a secret, I suppose."

"I would do much for Otho Killigrew. Not that I agree with his views on politics; oh no! 'Long live King George,' I say, but I would serve

him in this matter, and if you wedded him I would say nothing."

"And what price would he pay you for this?"

"He, he!" and again the old wretch laughed feebly, "there would be no price. Of course not. It is simply an arrangement—a private arrangement between two gentlemen. You see, my dear lady, I have proofs that your father was not legally married. Still it is morally yours, and if you marry my friend, Master Otho Killigrew, no one ever need to know that you are base-born."

He uttered the last words in such a tone as must have wounded my dear maid sorely; but she spoke steadily and clearly for all that.

"Look you," she replied, "your words may be true; I am afraid they are. Well, tell all you can, proclaim to the world that I am base-born in the eyes of the law. That threat shall not make me do what you ask. If I am penniless, I am penniless; but rather than marry Otho Killigrew I would beg my bread from door to door, I would earn my living as a servant in a farm kitchen."

"It is hard to use force, my fair cousin," said Otho, "but I am not beaten easily. When I set my mind upon a thing,—well, I generally get it." He hesitated again, and then went on still more slowly. "You see, I generally prepare my plans carefully beforehand. I have done so in this case. I knew your character, and I anticipated your answer. My friend Trevisa is a very religious man, and hath a friend who is a clergyman. It is true he doth not bear a very high character, but that is because he hath been sadly misunder-

stood. Still, he is a very obliging man, and has on many occasions rendered valuable service. At great risk to myself I have brought him here to-night. He will overlook the little matter of your consent, and marry us at once. You see, I love you, and—well, I desire the rents of Restormel Estate; I need them badly in fact."

"But I will not wed you."

"I say in this case, the Reverend Mr. Winter will overlook the little matter of your consent. It is true he is not of the true faith, but I shall be willing to overlook that little matter in this case."

"Then I will proclaim my shame to the world. I will tell every one what you have told me."

"That doth not matter. Peter Trevisa is the only one who holds the secret of this matter. He will at the proper time deny all knowledge of it. You see how perfectly plain-spoken I am." Then my dear maid spoke again, and her voice was indeed sad.

"I am all alone," she said, "I have no friends. You are many against one poor girl. Very well, do your worst, I will not do one thing that you say. Oh, you cowards, you poor miserable cowards! If I were a man you would not dare act so. And I do not believe any one calling himself a clergyman would do as you say; but even if he will, I will resist you to the last, and I will die by my own hand rather than"—then I heard her sob bitterly.

I could bear no more. If this were a farce, I could not allow it to continue further; if they in-

tended carrying out their threats, it was time to interfere; even Hugh Boscawen no longer held me back. I put my shoulder to the door and burst it open.

Without ado, Hugh Boscawen went across the room and placed his hand on Otho Killigrew's shoulder.

"Otho Killigrew, I arrest you in the King's name," he said.

Otho did not lose his presence of mind, but turned coolly towards him.

"Why, my lord?" he said, "what have I done to be arrested? I defy you to prove aught against me."

"That remains to be seen," he said; then he gave a whistle, and immediately his men entered.

Peter Trevisa and his son had started to their feet and were staring at us, but were at first too frightened to speak; near them was a man dressed as a minister of the gospel, and there was no need to take a second look at him to know that he was a disgrace to his calling. Doubtless he was one of those outcast clergymen who were notorious in that day, and who would for a fee perform the marriage ceremony under the most outrageous circumstances. The country had for a long time been disgraced by its marriage laws, for thereby all sorts of outrages had been committed. Young squires owning much property had been dragged into inns, drugged, or made drunk, and had then been married even to fallen women on the streets. It is true that such scenes, though common in London, had not so often happened in Cornwall;

at the same time, some in our county had been forced into unholy alliances. All this became impossible a few years after, when Lord Hardwick's famous marriage act was passed; but at that time, had I not come upon the scene, I believe that Otho Killigrew, in spite of my dear maid's continuous refusal, would have used means to have gone through an unholy farce, and this vile clergyman's signature would have made it legal.

Not far from the rest Otho Killigrew had stood, and as I entered I had seen the look of cruel determination on his face, the look which made his brothers fear him and which told them that he would surely gain his ends. Doubtless he had prepared for all exigencies, and had bargained with the two Trevisas, for they, after failing to gain their way with Nancy, would be willing to sell their secret to the highest bidder.

My dear maid's face had been turned from me, but I saw she stood upright before them, and was in an attitude of defiance, even although she stood helpless and alone.

She had not seen me; her eyes had been turned towards Hugh Boscawen, who had gone straight to Otho Killigrew; neither, I think, had any one noticed me. Doubtless they all fancied I was dead, killed by Benet Killigrew's hand, even as Otho had said.

"It is a dangerous thing to arrest the King's faithful subjects," went on Otho quietly, although his lips twitched nervously, "and I am faithful. True, evil reports may have been circulated about

me; but who is the man who can prove treason against me? No man, my lord."

"There is one, Otho Killigrew," I said quietly.

He stared like one who had seen a ghost, and stammered incoherently, but I paid but little heed to him, for my dear maid had heard my voice, and with a cry of joy and hands outstretched came towards me.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE KING'S GRATITUDE.

For the next few minutes every one in the room was in a state of consternation, for so certain had they all been of my death that they seemed to have difficulty in believing that I could indeed be Roger Trevanion. Even Nancy, who had been cool and defiant up to now, broke quite down, and asked me again and again, sobbing and laughing at the same time, all sort of fond, foolish questions which I will not write down.

Presently, however, Otho Killigrew obtained command over himself, and said to me:

"The devil hath again missed his own then. I was a fool to trust Benet."

"You see Benet fought as a man," I replied; "unlike you, he would not act as a butcher."

I was sorry afterwards that I answered him thus, for it is a coward's trick to strike a man when he is down; but when I called to mind what I had just heard I could scarce restrain myself. Had he shown any signs of penitence I should

have pitied him, for I saw that all hope had gone from his face, and it is easy to have kindly feelings towards a man who is beaten.

Peter Trevisa, however, behaved differently. The old man's face was yellow with fear, for he knew the power Hugh Boscawen possessed.

"My lord," he whined, "this is a fearful blow, a fearful blow that you should have discovered a traitor in my house. But I knew nought of it, my lord; he came here on a matter entirely different."

"He did," replied Hugh Boscawen, "and that matter shall be sifted to the very bottom."

"I do not think you—you understand, my lord," he said stammeringly.

"Perfectly. You were about to force this maid into an unholy marriage, and you had promised to keep secret some information you say you possess concerning her father's marriage. Whatever it is, it shall be secret no longer. That I can promise you. Whether you have placed yourself within the grip of the law remains to be proved. That is a question which also applies to you," he added, turning to the clergyman.

"No, my lord," replied the Reverend Mr. Winter. "I was invited here to perform a marriage ceremony in the ordinary way. I had no knowledge that anything was wrong, and should certainly have refused to comply with the wishes of Master Otho Killigrew after having understood the lady's sentiments."

It was, of course, impossible to prove that the man spoke lies, as the man had uttered no word

before, and we knew nothing of the history of his coming.

"Well, everything shall be sifted to the bottom," repeated Hugh Boscawen, "and justice shall be done to all. As far as Mistress Molesworth is concerned, she shall accompany me to Tregothnan this very night. As for you, Trevanion, you will naturally want to go to your home."

"Pardon me, my lord," said old Peter Trevisa, his avarice overcoming his fear, "he hath no home."

"Hath no home, what mean you?"

"Trevanion is mine, my lord; I possess all the deeds, and Roger Trevanion hath no right to go there."

"I have heard something of this," said Boscawen; "tell me all the details."

Whereupon Peter told him of his relations with my father and of the episode which I described in the beginning of this history.

"I think you have not told all, Master Peter Trevisa." It was Nancy who spoke.

"There is nothing more to tell—nothing," snarled Peter.

"There is much," replied Nancy.

"Then tell it if you care; tell it."

But she was silent. She remembered that a recital of the scene would give me pain, and spoke no word.

"I will tell it, my lord," I said; "the time hath come when it should be told. I did a base thing, I made a bargain with this man. He has told you how he became sole possessor of Trevanion,

but, as Mistress Nancy has declared, there is more to tell. This man bade me come here, and he promised me that if I would bring Mistress Nancy Molesworth here he would give me back the deeds of the estate and forgive half the sum I owed him."

"But what was his purpose in proposing this?"

"I knew not at the time, my lord. I was reckless, foolish, extravagant; and to my eternal shame I made a bargain with him. After much difficulty I brought her here, but not until I had besought her not to come. You see she had made me so ashamed of myself that I loathed the mission I had undertaken. I told her the history of what I had done, and in spite of all my advice she insisted on coming."

"I see. Then you can claim your own."

"I offered it, my lord, offered it before an attorney, but he refused, he—he would not take it."

"Is that true, Trevanion?"

"It is, my lord. I—I could not take the price of my base deed."

Hugh Boscawen looked at me steadily; he was a gentleman, and understood that which was in my heart.

"That, too, must be investigated," he said quietly; "but still you have not told me Trevisa's object in asking you to bring Mistress Molesworth here."

"It was this secret, my lord. He thought she was base like himself. He believed she would be glad to wed his son when he placed his case before her."

"And she, of course, refused?"

"Yes, my lord."

Hugh Boscawen seemed to be thinking for a few seconds, then he said quietly:

"Yes, Mistress Molesworth shall accompany me to Tregothnan until the matter be investigated, and you, Trevanion, must go to your old home. Trevisa hath not complied with the usual formalities in calling in the mortgages, hence the place is still yours."

"No, no; it is mine, my lord," cried old Peter.

"It is my advice, my wish that you go there, Trevanion, and you have the right."

"And I, my lord?" remarked Otho, who had been listening intently, "may I be privileged to know where I am to go?"

"You are a prisoner," replied Boscawen.

It was sore grief for me to see my dear maid ride away with Boscawen, even although it was best for her to do so. Indeed there seemed no way in which I could serve her. In spite of her safety, therefore, I rode to Trevanion with a sad heart; for truly all seemed darkness when she was not near. I was weak and ill, too, for although I had disobeyed Dr. Inch in going to Treviscoe that night, I was scarcely fit to undertake the journey.

It was late when I reached Trevanion, so late that the servants had gone to bed, but old Daniel was quickly aroused, and no sooner did he know that it was I who called to him than his joy knew no bounds. In a few minutes every servant in the place was dressed, all eager to serve me. The

tears come into my eyes as I write even now, for I call to mind the looks on their faces, their tearful eyes, and their protestations of joy. I suppose I had been an indulgent master, but I had done nothing to deserve the affection they lavished on me.

"God bless 'ee, Master Roger; God bless 'ee!" they said again and again as they hovered around me.

All this gave me sadness as well as joy, because of the fact that shortly they would all have to seek another master. Once back in the old home again, it became dearer to me than ever. Each room had its history, every article of furniture was associated with some incident in the history of the Trevanions. Again and again I wandered around the house, and then, unable to restrain myself, I went out into the night and wandered among the great oaks in the park, and plucked the early spring flowers. The night had become gloriously fine, and I could plainly see the outlines of the old homestead, which was never so dear to me as now.

I heard the clock striking the hour, and although it was two in the morning, I did not go in, it was so joyful to breathe the pure spring air and to wander among the places I had haunted as a boy.

"Maaster Roger!" It was old Daniel who shouted.

"Yes, Daniel; anything the matter?"

"Aw, no sur, we was onnly wonderin' ef you wos oal saafe, sur; tes oal right."

"If it were only really mine," I thought, "and if those faithful old servants could only have my dear Nancy as mistress. If I could but bring her here, and say, 'This is all yours, my dear maid.'"

Well, why could I not? It was still in my power. Mr. Hendy still held the papers. It *was* mine. But only by accepting the price of base service. No, I could not be happy if I took advantage of the bargain. The look in my dear maid's eyes forbade me. But what could I do? She was nameless, and would, I was afraid, soon be homeless and friendless. Lord Falmouth had told me to wait until I heard from him, before I went to Tregothnan, and until that time I should not be able to see her. I would have gone to London and offered my services to the King but for my promise to await Boscawen's commands.

I was sorely troubled about these things, and yet it was a joy to be at Trevanion, joy beyond words. For I was at home, and my dear Nancy loved me. Destitute we might be, but we were still rich in each other's love, and as I remembered this I laughed aloud, and sang snatches of the songs I had sung as a boy.

"Daniel," I shouted.

"Yes, sur."

"Where is Chestnut?"

"In the stable, sur."

I made my way thither, and Chestnut trembled for very joy at the sight of me. If ever a horse spoke, he spoke to me in the joyful whinny he gave. He rubbed his nose against me, and seemed

to delight in my presence. After all, my home-coming was not without its joys.

"Whoever leaves me, my beauty," I cried, "you shall not leave me; and to-morrow we'll have a gallop together; you and I, Chestnut, do you hear?"

And Chestnut heard and understood, I am sure, for he whinnied again, and when I left the stable he gave a cry as if he sorrowed at seeing me go.

The last few weeks had been very strange to me, but I did not regret them. How could I? Had I not found my Nancy? Had I not won the love of the dearest maid in the world? Presently when I went to my bedroom I knelt down to pray. It was many years since I had prayed in this bedroom, not indeed since boyhood, but I could not help asking God to forgive my past and to thank Him for making me long to be a better man. I prayed for my dear Nancy, too; I could not help it, for she was as dear to me as my heart's blood, and it was through her that God had shown me what a man ought to be.

I did not sleep long, I could not; as soon as daylight came I rose and went out to hear the birds sing and to drink in the fresh sweet air of the morning. Everywhere life was bursting into beauty, and the sun shone on the glittering dew-drops. Presently the dogs came up to me and greeted me with mad, rollicking joy and gladsome barking; and then, when I went back to the house, the servants came around me bidding me a pleasant good-morning, and hoping I was well.

"You'm home for good, I hope, sur," they said

again and again; "tes fine and wisht wethout 'ee, sur; tes like another plaace when you be here, sur." And then although I tried, I could not tell them they would soon have to leave me, and that I was only there on sufferance.

After that many days passed away without news coming from any quarter. I saw no visitors save Lawyer Hendy, and he was less communicative and more grim than I had ever known him before. He professed entire ignorance of Peter Trevisa's plans, also of the investigation which Hugh Boscawen was making. It was very hard for me to refrain from going to Tregothnan, and demanding to see my Nancy, for truly my heart hungered more and more for her each day. I heard strange rumours concerning the Killigrews, but knew nothing for certain. Of Otho it was said that he had escaped from the King's men and was again at liberty, and this made me sore uneasy, for I knew that many schemes would be forming in his fertile brain; but, as I said, I knew nothing for certain. I still stayed at Trevanion, seldom going beyond the boundary of the estate, for Hugh Boscawen had charged me concerning this when we had parted.

At length, however, when many days had passed away, a messenger came to me from Tregothnan bearing a letter which summoned me thither without delay. So I mounted Chestnut, and before long I was closeted with Hugh Boscawen in the library of his old home.

"You expected to hear from me before, Trevanion?" he said cheerily.

"I did, my lord," I replied, "and it hath been weary waiting."

"I have not been idle," he replied. "It is but yesterday that I returned from London. I have held converse with his gracious majesty, King George II."

I waited in silence, for I did not see what this had to do with me.

"You found all well at Trevanion, I hope?"

"All well, my lord."

"You love the old place?"

"Dearly, as you may imagine."

"I can quite understand. This old house now —I have often been advised to pull it down and build something more modern, but for the life of me I cannot. Every room, every stone is dear to me. Probably my sons, or my sons' sons, will build a more pretentious dwelling, but this is good enough for me. It is a pity your pride forbids you from keeping that old place of yours. The Trevisas would turn it into a dog-kennel. Ought you not to reconsider the question?"

"I have considered it many times, my lord, but the thing is impossible. I did a base thing to promise Trevisa what I did, and to make a bargain with him; it would be baser still to receive the wages of service, unworthy my name."

"Ah well, you should know your own affairs, only it seems sad that you, the last member of a branch of your house, should be houseless, landless, and all for a fad."

"Better a Trevanion should be landless than take the price of dishonour," I said. "Mistress

Nancy Molesworth hath made me feel this. I hope she is well?" I brought in her name because I was longing to hear news concerning her.

"We will speak of her presently; but yes, I may say the young person is well. I understand, then, that you have decided to leave Trevanion rather than profit by your bargain with Trevisa?"

"I can do no other, my lord."

"No, you cannot, Trevanion, you cannot. Still you are not going to leave Trevanion."

"I am afraid it cannot be helped."

"Many things are possible when kings speak."

"I am afraid I do not understand," I said with a fast-beating heart.

"Then I will make you understand. I have, as I told you, but just returned from London; I have held converse with his gracious majesty, King George II. I have told him your story. I have informed him of the signal service you have rendered."

"Yes, my lord," I said, like one in a dream.

"He is not ungrateful, nay, he is much pleased; and as a reward for your fidelity and bravery, Trevanion is yours free of all incumbrances."

What followed after that I have but a dim remembrance, for indeed I was unable to pay much heed to the details which he communicated to me. Enough that Trevanion was mine, and that I could now give a home to my dear maid.

"With regard to the other matter," went on Hugh Boscawen, "the King could not interfere. The question of the law comes in, and the law is

sacred. The matter is not yet settled, but I am afraid everything will pass to the next of kin."

I said nothing, and although I knew it would be a sore blow to my dear maid, I am afraid it troubled me but little, for had I not Trevanion to offer her?

"It will be a sad blow to the maid," said Boscawen, "not simply because of the loss of the lands, but she is also without name. Foolish as it may seem, the fact of the illegality of her father's marriage, even although he thought all was well, will ruin her chances for life. Some yeoman might marry her, but no one of higher position. You, for example, would not give her your name. You could not. High as the Trevanions have stood, your friends would close their doors to such a wife."

"That would not matter, my lord," I answered quickly.

"Do you know young John Polperro too?" he asked without noticing my interruption.

"I have seen him once," I replied.

"It was at Endellion, was it not?"

"Yes, my lord."

"He has been here this morning."

"Indeed," I said, and although I scarce knew why, I became strangely excited.

"He had heard of my return, and rode here with all speed. News had reached him that I had assumed the guardianship of the maid. He had heard nothing of—of Trevisa's secret, and he came to repeat his offer of marriage."

"Did he see her?" I asked.

"No," replied Hugh Boscawen dryly, "he did not even ask for that honour."

I "No," I replied, much relieved; "why not?"

"He seemed eager to plead his cause until I told him the truth, and then——"

"What?" I asked.

"He said he would consult his father."

I laughed aloud.

"You seem merry, Trevanion."

"Yes, I am," I replied. "It shows the value of the love he protested at Endellion. But it would not have mattered, she would not have listened to him."

"I suppose I can guess your reason for saying this?"

"Most likely," I replied.

"But surely, Trevanion, you will not—that is, consider, man. It would not be simply wedding a penniless bride; she is worse than penniless. You see this stain upon her birth closes the door of every house in the country to her."

"Not all," I cried.

"You see," he went on, "you will now hold your head high when it is noised abroad, as it soon will be, that you have received favour from the King, that Trevanion is yours free from all encumbrance, you will be able to choose your bride from the fairest and the richest. Besides, you must think of further advancements at the King's hands. That would become impossible if you wedded this maid."

"My lord," I cried, "I love her! I never loved a woman before. I thought I did ten years ago,

and when she proved false I vowed I could never trust a woman again. But now——"

"But now, what?"

"You can guess, my lord."

"Then you are bent on marrying her?"

"I am going to beg her. to beseech her if needs be," I replied. "You say she is still in this house, my lord. Should I be imposing too much on your kindness if I ask that I may see her. I have not beheld her for many days, and my heart hungers for her sorely."

"How old are you, Trevanion?"

"Past thirty-two," I replied.

"You are not a boy," he said like one musing, "and you ought to know your mind." Then he looked steadily in my face as though he would read my inmost thoughts.

"He is right," he cried, looking fiercely out of the window and across the broad rich valley where the clear water of the river coiled. He seemed communing with himself and thinking of some event in his own past life.

"He is right," he repeated still fiercely; "by God, I would do it myself if I were in his place!"

He left the room abruptly without looking at me, and I was left alone. Minutes passed, I know not how many, and I stood waiting for my love.

Whatever might be the truth concerning her father's marriage, it was naught to me. Now that I had a home to offer her, everything was plain, and I could have shouted aloud in my joy. Had she been a beggar maid it would not have mattered; I loved her with all the strength of my

life, and my love had made me careless concerning the thoughts of the world. For love is of God, and knows nothing of the laws of man. Besides, I had looked into the depths of her heart; I had seen her sorrow when she thought I was in danger. I remembered the light which shone from her eyes when she came to me that night at Restormel. I remembered the tone of her voice when she had sobbed out my name.

I heard a rustle of a woman's dress outside the door, and eagerly, just like a thoughtless boy, I ran and opened it; and then I saw my Nancy, pale and wan, but still my Nancy,—and then I wanted naught more.

CHAPTER XXX.

IN WHICH UNCLE ANTHONY PLAYS HIS HARP.

Now of what Nancy and I said to each other during the next few minutes there is no need for me to write. At first joy conquered all other feelings, and we lived in a land from whence all sorrow had fled, but by and by she began to talk about "good-byes," and a look of sadness dimmed the bright light in her eyes. So I asked her the meaning of this, and it soon came out that she had been grieving sorely concerning the dark shadow which had fallen upon her life. She had learned from Hugh Boscawen probably about her father's marriage being invalid, and she felt her position keenly. For although she had been

treated with great kindness at the home of the Boscawens, she could not help believing that she was there on sufferance and not as an honoured guest. So to cheer her I told her of the good fortune that had befallen me, and how Hugh Boscawen had been commissioned to give me back my old home as a reward for the services I had rendered to my country. At this she expressed much joy, but persisted in saying that my good fortune had removed us further away from each other than ever. And then she repeated what Hugh Boscawen had said a few minutes before, and declared that she would never stand in the way of my advancement.

"And what would advancement be to me if I have not you, Nancy?" I asked.

She thought it would be a great deal.

"And do you love me, my dear?" I asked.

She thought I had no need to ask such a question.

"Then suppose you were mistress of Restormel, and I were without home, would you let me go away because I was poor and what the world called disgraced?"

And at this my Nancy began to laugh, even while her eyes grew dim with tears.

"No, Roger," she said; "but—but you are so different."

After that I would hear no further objections, neither indeed did she offer more, for she saw that they grieved me, and so it soon came about that she gave her consent to be the mistress of the home which I had won back.

"But you are giving me everything, and I am giving you nothing," she said.

"Nay," I replied, "but you can give me more, a thousand times more, than I can give you. Even although I could give you Trevanion a hundred times over, my gift would be as nothing compared with yours."

"And what can I give you?" she asked as if she were wondering greatly.

"Nancy Molesworth," I answered, and then the light came back to her eyes again, and she came to me joyfully, even as she had come at Restormel.

Now those who read this may regard what I have written as the foolish meanderings of a love-sick swain, and not worthy of being written down; nevertheless it gives me joy beyond measure to think of that glad hour when I was able to make my Nancy laugh again. For I who for years had laughed at love had entered into a new life, and now all else was as nothing compared with the warm kisses she gave me and the words of love she spoke. True, I had passed my boyhood, but I have discovered that, no matter what our age may be, the secret of all life's joy is love. Surely, too, God's love is often best expressed in the love of the one woman to whom a man gives his heart, and the love of the children that may be born to them.

I would not wait long for our wedding-day, neither, indeed, did my Nancy desire it; and so three weeks later I took her to Trevanion, where she was welcomed by my old servants, even as

though she were sent direct to them from God. And in truth this was so.

Now the wedding feast at Trevanion was not of a kind that found favour in the county, for by my dear maid's wish we had none of high degree among us, save Hugh Boscawen only, who, in spite of his many duties, spent some hours with us. Indeed, he did not leave till near sundown, for, in spite of the many cares which pressed upon him, he seemed to rejoice in the thought of our love, and in the glad shouts of the youths and maidens who danced beneath the trees on the closely shorn grass.

For my own part, my heart was overfull with gladness, for never surely was the world so fair to any man as it was to me that June day. All around the birds were singing as if to give a welcome to Nancy, while everywhere the gay flowers gloried in their most beauteous colours as though they wished to commemorate our wedding-day. Away in the far distance we could hear the shout of the hay-makers, and above us the sun shone in a cloudless sky. Everything was in the open air, for although I loved the very walls of the old house, my Nancy desired that the wedding guests should be received on the grassy lawns, where all was fair and free, and where we could hear the distant murmur of the sea. And indeed it was best so. There the farmers and their wives, whose families had been tenants for many generations, conversed more freely, while the young men and their sweethearts danced more gaily.

But best of all, my Nancy rejoiced beyond

measure, especially when the old servants and tenants came to her and wished her all happiness. For no one seemed to know but that she was the owner of Restormel. Neither Peter Trevisa nor his son had breathed one word concerning their secret, and Hugh Boscawen had held his peace.

When the sun was sinking behind the trees and lighting up the western sky with wondrous glory, the man to whom I owed so much took his leave.

"Trevanion, you are a happy man," he said.

I did not reply save to give a hearty laugh and to press Nancy's hand, which lay on my arm.

"I am afraid there may be dark days for England ahead, but you, Trevanion, have entered into light. Now, then, before I go let me see your tenants and servants dance again."

So I called to the old fiddlers, men who had lived in the parish all their lives, and they struck up "Sir Roger de Coverley," when old and young laughed alike.

"All seem happy save yon old blind beggar," remarked my friend; "he seems sad and hungry."

"Then he shall not be sad and hungry long," I said, noting for the first time an old man on the lawn; "stay a little longer, and you shall see that he will soon be as happy as the rest."

"No," replied Boscawen; "I give you good evening, and all joy," and therewith he went away.

"Fetch yon old man, Daniel, and give him of the best of everything," I said; "food and drink,

aye, and a pipe and tobacco too. No man shall be sad and weary to-day if I can help it."

So Daniel fetched him, and all the while young and old laughed and danced for very joy, aye, white-haired tottering old men and women, as well as the little children made the place ring with their joyous shouts.

"You are happy, my love, are you not?" I said turning to the dear maid at my side.

"Yes, perfectly happy, but for one cloud in the sky."

"Nay, there must be nothing. Tell me what that one cloud is, and I will drive it away."

"I cannot help it. You give me everything, and I give you nothing. I never cared for Restormel till you told me you loved me. I do not care about it for myself now—only for you, Roger. If I could bring you something now——"

"Please sir, that old man wants to speak to you."

I turned and saw the old beggar standing by Daniel's side.

"I wish you joy on your wedding-day," he said in a thin quavering voice. He was much bent, and his eyes were nearly covered with green patches.

"Thank you, old man," I said, "let them bring you food and drink. You are weary, sit down on this chair and rest."

"I wish my lady joy, too," he said; "full joy, complete joy. That is an old man's blessing, and that is what I bring to her. May I—may I kiss my lady's hand?"

Now I was not over-pleased at this; but another glance at the poor old creature drove away all unkind thought; besides, it was my wedding-day. And so Nancy gave him her hand to kiss.

"May every cloud depart from your sky, my sweet lady," he said; "aye, and by God's blessing the last cloud shall be driven away."

At this I started, for he had been repeating our own words. I looked at him again, and my heart beat strangely.

"Let me add joy to the day, and not sorrow," he continued. "Let me bring my harp, and I will play the old Cornish melodies, and I will tell the old Cornish stories."

"But not until you have had food and rest," said my dear Nancy.

He would not wait for this, however, so the people flocked around him, and he played and sung wondrously for such an old man. After this he told the people stories which moved the wedding guests much, first to tears and then to laughter.

"You shall stay at the house to-night, old man," I said; "what is your name?"

"I have many names," he replied, "but many call me David, because I am cunning with the harp and can charm away evil spirits, even as King David of old charmed away the evil spirits from the heart of Saul. There is only one sad thought in the heart of your dear lady to-night, and that my harp shall charm away."

After the guests were all gone that night I called the old minstrel to the room where my

forefathers had sat, and where my Nancy and I had come. The lights were not yet lit, for it was near midsummer, and the night shone almost like day. The windows were open too, and I cared not to shut out the sweet air of that summer evening.

He came, bearing his harp with him, and when we were alone I spoke freely.

"Uncle Anthony," I said, "take off the patches from your eyes and stand upright."

"Ah, you have penetrated my disguise?" he said.

"Even before you spoke so strangely," I replied.

"I will not take off my patches, and I must not stay at your house to-night, Roger Trevanion," he said quietly. "In an hour from now I must be on my way again."

"But why?"

"I am not yet safe. For the present I will say no more. Sometime, perchance, I may come to your house as an honoured guest."

"And you shall have a royal welcome," was my answer.

"But before I go, I would drive away the one cloud in the sky."

I did not speak, for truly I was in the dark as to his meaning.

"You, my lady Nancy," said Uncle Anthony, turning towards her, "believe that you are not mistress of Restormel. I found out old Peter Trevisa's secret, and so, although my heart was saddened at the failure of my plans, and although you, Roger Trevanion, caused their failure, I de-

termined, after all our hopes were shattered, that I would find out the truth."

"And what have you discovered?" I asked eagerly.

"I have been to Ireland—to many places," he answered, "and now I have come to give my lady Nancy her wedding dowry. Here it is," and he placed a package in my love's hands. "There is proof," he went on, "that your father's marriage was valid, proof that none can deny, and so Restormel is rightfully yours."

At this my dear love broke down altogether, for she had never dreamed of this, but soon her tears were wiped away and her eyes shone again.

"O Roger!" she cried, "I am glad now that you thought I was poor when you married me."

Concerning the meaning of this I have asked her many times, but she will not tell me, neither can I think what it is, for I am sure she never doubted my love.

"And what hath become of the Killigrews?" I asked presently, after many things were said which I need not here write down.

"They were hunted from place to place as though they had been foxes," replied Uncle Anthony. "Old Colman hath died of disappointment; aye, more than disappointment—of a broken heart; all the rest, with the exception of Benet and Otho, have escaped to France. They will never come back to England again."

"And Benet and Otho," I asked, "where are they?"

"Otho escaped," cried the old man with a low

laugh; "he is as cunning as the devil. He hath gone to Scotland, and hath joined the Highlanders."

"And Benet?"

"Benet deserved a better fate. After you and he fought that night," and again the old man laughed in his low meaning way, "and he had rejoined his companions, he complained much of the way matters had been managed, and declared that he would no more lift up his hand against the King. Whereupon many being savage with drink, and mad at the words he spoke, accused him of desiring not to kill you. This led to many unwise things being said, and presently many of them turned upon him like a troop of jackals turn upon a lion."

"But he fought them?"

"Aye, and rejoiced in it, for fighting is the breath of Benet's life. But they were too many for him,—one acted a coward's part and stabbed him in the back."

Now at this my heart was sore, for although Benet and I had scarcely ever met save to fight, and although he was a wild savage fellow, I could not help loving him.

"But he died like a man," I cried; "he showed no fear?"

"He died grandly. He had but one regret at dying, he said."

"And that?" I asked eagerly.

"I was not there, but one who was, told me. 'Aye, I am grieved,' he said, 'Trevanion promised to fight me. He was the only real man who ever

faced me, and now I shall not live to prove that I was the better man of the two.' "

We kept Uncle Anthony more than an hour, but we could not prevail upon him to stay all night. It was not for him, he said, to stay at Trevanion on the night after our wedding-day, but before he went he told us many things concerning his life which I could not understand before. I need not write them down here, for he would not wish it. I will only say that the remembrance of the love he once bore for a maid made him love Nancy as a daughter, and this almost led to a breach between him and the Killigrews.

"You will come again as soon as you can?" I said to him when at length he left the house.

"Aye, as soon as I can. May God bless you, Roger Trevanion."

"He hath blessed me," I answered; "blessed me more than I believed possible."

"And God bless you, Mistress Nancy Trevanion," he said, turning to my dear wife.

"And may God bless you, Uncle Anthony."

"Yes, Uncle Anthony, that is the name I love most. May I kiss your hand again, dear lady?"

"Yes," said my Nancy.

"Not only your hand, dear lady, but your brow, if I may."

"Yes, yes," was Nancy's response.

"I loved a maid many years ago," he said; "her face was pure like yours, my child, and her eyes shone with the same light, and she—she was called Nancy."

He kissed her forehead with all the passionate

fervour of a boy, and then went away without speaking another word.

Of the packet he brought my dear wife I need say little, save that when I showed it to Mr. Hendy, my lawyer, he remarked that none could doubt its value. It proved beyond all dispute the validity of Godfrey Molesworth's marriage with Nancy Killigrew, although the wedding took place in Ireland under peculiar circumstances. And then it came about that Restormel passed into our hands without question, and people who would doubtless have treated her with scorn, had the marriage been illegal, now desired to claim her friendship.

I have often wondered since that night whether the Nancy which Uncle Anthony had loved long years before was not the Nancy Killigrew who became Godfrey Molesworth's wife, and my Nancy's mother.

Hugh Boscawen rejoiced greatly over my dear wife's good fortune, and I have since been given to understand that it was through him Peter Trevisa had uttered no word concerning his secret, and that he was using all his influence with the King in order to persuade him to seek to use means whereby my Nancy might be able to rightfully claim her name and fortune. Concerning this, however, he would never speak to me, although I asked him many times.

Not long after our marriage, however, serious matters disturbed the country, and Hugh Boscawen became much perturbed. Charles the Pretender succeeded in landing in Scotland with a

very few followers, and immediately he was joined by a large number of Highlanders. Concerning his fortunes there is of course no need to speak. All the country rang with the news of his victories, and finally of his defeat. Few, however, seem to realize that, had he landed in Cornwall months before, his fortunes might have been different. Some there are who say that there was never a danger of his coming to a part of the country where his chances would have been so poor, and many more say that the army of brave-hearted Cornishmen were gathered together by Boscawen without reason. But what I have set down shows that the man whom the world calls Lord Falmouth, and whom I always love to think of as Hugh Boscawen, although not a great leader of armies, was still wise in his times, and a true lover of his king and country.

Otho Killigrew became a follower of the Pretender in Scotland, and had Charles Stuart been successful in his enterprises, he would doubtless have given Otho as high a place as that which Tom Killigrew occupied at the court of Charles II., perhaps higher, for he was cunning beyond most men; but at the battle of Culloden Moor, which the Duke of Cumberland won, and when the Pretender's forces were utterly routed, Otho was killed. Thus it was that Endellion as well as Restormel came to Nancy, for none of the Killigrews who fled to France dared to come back and claim their old home. It was not of much value to us, however, for both house and lands were mortgaged for all they were worth.

I live at Trevanion still, for, although Restormel is a fine and larger house, it is not home to me, neither is it to Nancy for that matter, and we shall never think of leaving the spot endeared by long association and obtained through the favour of the King. Besides, we could not be as happy anywhere else. All the servants know us and love us, and old Daniel, although he grows weak and feeble now, thinks no one can serve us as well as he. Amelia Lanteglos, or rather Amelia Daddo, is no longer maid to Nancy, for she hath married her one-time lover, who now hath a farm on the Trevanion estate; but Hennifer Lanteglos is with us, and no more faithful servant can be found anywhere.

Our eldest son, Roger Molesworth, is true to the name he bears, for he hath inherited all his mother's beauty, and looks forward to the time when he will inherit Restormel and live on the estate; but our second son, Benet, cares for none of these things. He is big and daring and strong like the man after whom he is named, and cares for nothing so much as the wild free life of the country. I tell Nancy that he resembles Benet in many ways, and she, with the mother's love shining from her eyes, says that he possesses all Benet Killigrew's virtues but none of his vices.

I have but little to tell now, and that little shall be told quickly.

About a year after the final defeat of the Pretender, and when the country had settled down into peace, Jennifer Lanteglos came into the room

where my Nancy and I sat alone together, save for the presence of Molesworth, who crowed mightily as he lay in his cradle.

"Please, sur, an old man is at the door asking if he may come in and tell tales."

"Let him come in, Jennifer," I said.

"In the kitchen, sur?"

"No, in here," for a great hope was in my heart.

A few seconds later an old man entered the room bearing a harp.

"Welcome home, Uncle Anthony," I said.

"No, not home," he said tremblingly, "but I will stay one night if you will let me."

"No, always," said my dear Nancy, "stay for the sake of my mother, the other Nancy."

He is with us still, and is much respected in our parish. No one knows the part he played in the days before Nancy became my wife, and although I believe Hugh Boscawen hath his suspicions, he says nothing.

THE END.

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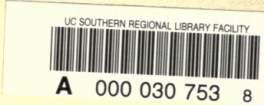
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